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Carpets, beards, and baseball signs : an intertextual and interdiscursive look at meanings constructed in a cross-cultural setting for language learning.

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CARPETS, BEARDS, AND BASEBALL SIGNS: AN INTERTEXTUAL AND INTERDISCURSIVE LOOK AT MEANINGS CONSTRUCTED IN A CROSS-CULTURAL SETTING FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

A Dissertation Presented

by

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ABSTRACT

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This ethnographic study focuses on a small group of Iranian young adults, four brothers and recent immigrants living in a small city in New England. I used North American popular texts from a variety of sources as content to assist them in developing English language proficiency. For the purpose of this study, I had a dual role of both facilitator and researcher. I collected data throughout an intensive language course I taught over a summer. In this course, the participants negotiated meanings of signs and texts embedded within broader discourses. These interpretations and negotiations of meanings of texts are the focus of the analysis. Through the sharing of texts and discourses, joint discourses were constructed, which became part of the analysis and findings. In addition, the analysis reflects ways participation structure(s) changed during the course, particularly when participant texts or discourses were related to their sociocultural worlds as opposed to North American texts and discourses.

Data was collected for this study using ethnographic field notes, audiotapes of the classes, audiotapes of personal interviews with participants, course materials, handouts, written assignments done by the participants during the course, and reflective evaluations. Analytical tools or constructs – specifically, intertextuality, interdiscoursivity, and identity – were the focus of the analysis of the data (Bloome, et al., 2005).

The findings in this study indicate that the use of popular texts as schematically accessible content can be an important strategy for developing language skills of young adults from another culture. The findings also indicate that for meaningful discourse to develop it is important for the participants to be able to make intertextual and interdiscursive connections to their sociocultural backgrounds. When this happens, the findings indicate that the participation structure tended to change to learner-centered as the participants became 'knowledgeable cultural authorities.' When this occurs, interaction increases, and more meaningful texts and discourse(s) are constructed.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has been my professional experience that using content from popular culture texts can, and often does, stimulate interest and literacy development in young adult students in academic settings. Many in the field of language and literacy development are also proponents of this approach (see Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999; Burley, 1997; Fitzgerald, 1997; Maasik & Solomon, 2003). Students are often more engaged and more passionate about the subject matter when the content relates to their present sociocultural lives. However, while there is literature that supports the effectiveness of using popular culture texts for the development of literacies for native speakers of English, there is a dearth of literature about the use of popular culture texts for students who are non-native English speakers. As I began the study, and when I engaged the data later on, I was guided by the following three research questions: How and to what extent do participants construct meaningful and critical discourse(s) through joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs? In what ways do the conversational structure(s) of the group impact learning during negotiations of popular textual meanings? What pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts?

Currently, there is an apparent need for research about the influences and uses of popular culture texts in language learning situations for learners in and from the post colonial world. Thus, my intent in this study has been to begin to fill this gap in the

literature by observing the use of popular texts as a means to develop language and literacies through an ethnographic case study of a small group of recent immigrants, four brothers from Iran. Thus, this study contributes to the conversation about the use of popular texts for language and literacy development.

In chapter two, I discuss theoretical frameworks, such as sociocultural theory, critical theory, and social semiotics, that helped shape the study and my thinking during the analysis, and I provide a literature review about these frameworks in relation to the use of popular texts for language and literacy development. Social semiotics is the study of meaning-making within communities. Therefore, it is a relevant and important theoretical framework for this study because the analysis emphasizes the construction of meaning within the group. Critical theory not only looks at ways power in society impacts individuals and communities, it also focuses on ways learners are empowered within educational settings (critical pedagogy). Thus, critical theory provides an important lens through which the study examines empowerment within the group as the participants construct meanings and become centered in the conversations. The study also focuses on texts and discourses constructed by the participants that relate to power issues in their sociocultural worlds. Sociocultural theory provides an important, comprehensive theoretical lens for this study because it purports that language and culture are intertwined. That is, a basic premise of sociocultural theory is that language and literacy are developed within the context of sociocultural texts, discourses, and practices. This broad theoretical framework has influenced the direction and meaning of the entire study, including the introduction of popular texts as content for non-native English language learners. In sum, the aforementioned frameworks provide perspectives

that are critically important when examining the use of popular texts in pedagogical contexts. I believed going into the study that the negotiation of 'signs' embedded in texts and discourses would provide insights about the participants' cultural worlds. At the same time, the participants, by learning about signs embedded in texts and discourses from the target language/culture, would experience opportunities for language learning and literacy development. Thus, the review of the literature discusses social semiotics, popular culture and critical theory, and popular culture and sociocultural theory. Discussions about the implications of popular culture in a global context and the use of popular texts for language and literacy development conclude the literature review.

I use specific analytical tools to observe and analyze how meanings of signs, texts, and discourses are constructed in a cross-cultural context. Specifically, the data is analyzed intertextually and interdiscursively (Bloome, et al., 2005). The use of these analytic concepts has enabled me to observe how meanings of texts and discourses are constructed by the participants in a cross-cultural context. These analytical tools also focus the analysis so that I am able to 'see' the connections among various texts and discourses that the participants have constructed. These analytical tools are discussed at the beginning of the literature review.

In chapter three, I discuss the research design. That is, I discuss the research setting, the background of the participants, research goals and questions, and methods of data collection, which include audiotaping content from the course and fieldnotes. I discuss methods of analysis, validity issues, and ethical issues. My research was conducted in a setting that enabled me to observe how a small group of Iranian young

adults (re)constructed discourses through engagement with popular texts. Specifically, I developed an intensive language course and taught it to these recent immigrants over a summer, using North American popular texts and other cultural texts as content. The content, for which the learners themselves had input in regards to the specific texts used, came from popular music, videos, contemporary magazines, newspapers, television, advertising, sports, and other media that comprise contemporary popular culture. As the facilitator, I used print and non-print popular and other cultural texts for the purpose of language and literacy development. As the researcher, I observed and recorded the processes that the learners went through as they (re)interpreted the meanings of the texts, (re)negotiated the meanings of the texts, and (re)constructed meaning with each other through collaborative learning activities. These processes became a primary focus of the discourse analysis.

Thus, through this study, I have explored the interpretations and constructions of meanings of popular and other cultural texts. I have analyzed interpretations of texts and signs that the participants constructed for cultural and linguistic meaning. I have analyzed the participants' negotiations of meanings of texts and the constructions of joint discourses. In addition, I have analyzed identity and changes in participation structure during the eight-week period of the course.

In chapters four, five, and six, the analysis and findings of the study are presented. The purpose of chapters four, five, and six is to display the analysis of data to address the research questions explicitly stated in the beginning of this introduction.

In chapter four, the analysis focuses on the ways participants constructed interpretations of signs for cultural and linguistic meaning. Excerpts are selected from

the data and given titles. Excerpts are selected that relate to the analytical interests of the researcher. Specifically, I have chosen excerpts where the participants are engaged, and where there appears to be instances of critical reflection during the negotiations of meaning of various signs. The titles of the excerpts presented are: Olympics; Military Signs in a Cross-Cultural Context; Pop Music Versus Facial Hair; Yabahasani or Government Attire; Donkeys and Politics, Iranian Flags; and Baseball Signs.

In chapter five, the analysis focuses on negotiations of meanings of texts and the construction of joint discourses. Excerpts are again selected from the data and given titles. However, the selection process of the excerpts from the data in this chapter is based on theme or a specific discourse. Specifically, excerpts that relate to gender, labor, and socio-economic class are selected because the focus of the analysis is on the construction of critical discourse(s) by the participants. The titles of the excerpts presented in chapter five are: Gender Names in Iran; Persian Carpets, Labor, and Gender; the Women's Movement in Iran; 'Social Whirl': the Rural/Urban Divide; and 'Cinderella in a Cross-Cultural Context.

In chapter six, I look at changes in participation structure and its impact on identity. Excerpts are again selected from the data. However, in this chapter, titles are not given because the analysis focuses on participation structure(s), not on theme or topic, although. I do look at ways theme and topic influence participation structure. The excerpts are selected chronologically. Specifically, I choose excerpts from the beginning, the middle, and the end of the course. The purpose of this selection process is to analyze and assess changes in the participation structure over time. I observe how the topic or theme of texts and discourses influence participation structure(s), and how

change in participation influences or impacts identity. The purpose of this particular focus is that I take the position that language learning and language acquisition is facilitated when there is co-participation and co-learning between 'teachers' and 'learners' in language-learning settings. When a teacher becomes a co-learner, and there is co-participation, it allows more space for language learners to construct texts and discourses (Young and Miller, 2004). Thus, in chapter six, I look at how the participants construct roles, and I observe how this co-construction influences or constructs participation structure(s) (Young & Miller, 2004, p.520). To analyze the data, I needed a specific analytical tool. Since the ways one participates within social settings is closely intertwined with identity, I decided to look at identity as a construct as the participants interacted with one another. I used Bloome's concept of identity as I analyzed the transcripts of class interactions to evaluate changes in participation structure(s) (Bloome, et al., 2005).

Finally, in chapter seven, I provide conclusions, implications, commentary and a summary. Implications for the field of language education and educators are presented based on the findings of this research. Specifically, I discuss implications of the use of popular texts for second language acquisition. I discuss implications of the use of social semiotics as a framework for language learning, along with its connections with the development of critical analysis and critical discourse. I present conclusions about the importance of making intertextual and interdiscursive connections with the learners' sociocultural backgrounds. I also share conclusions about the challenges and affordances of using North American texts in second language acquisition settings, including issues related to the use of popular texts from the United States in both

domestic and global contexts. Finally, I present commentary about participatory structure(s) during the course and the impact these structures had on learning. I discuss the ways identity influenced participatory structure(s) and the role of cultural sharing in constructing identities.

In sum, chapter two begins with a review of related literature; chapter three discusses the research framework; chapters four, five, and six focus on the analysis and findings of the research; and chapter seven discusses implications of the findings for the field of language and literacy development in educational settings. The study as a whole is guided by the three questions stated in the beginning of the introduction: How and to what extent do participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs? In what ways do the conversational structure(s) of the group impact learning during negotiations of popular textual meanings? What pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts?

There is little doubt that we live in an age of great transformation. Identities are in flux as we have entered a global era. Most would agree that global popular texts and signs, often dispersed through mass media, are having an impact on the lives and identities of people around the world. "The Golden Arches are now more widely recognized than the Christian cross" (Schlosser, 2001, p.5). Today, signs that are associated with American popular texts are widespread and global. Corporations have long been aware of the power of signs. "Hoping that nostalgic childhood memories of a brand will lead to a lifetime of purchases, companies now plan 'cradle-to-grave'

advertising strategies. They have come to believe what Ray Kroc and Walt Disney realized long ago – a person's 'brand loyalty' may begin as early as the age of two" (Schlosser, 2001, p.43). It has become imperative to study how different learners negotiate meanings of signs and texts in cross-cultural contexts, such as diverse classrooms and other settings, and how this impacts language development.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study observes the use of texts and signs from popular culture as content for an English language class taught to Iranian immigrants, four brothers, ranging in age from 21 to 30 at the time of the study. I collected and analyzed data as the students constructed interpretations of various discourses embedded in American popular texts. The setting provided me a learning environment, which afforded me the opportunity to address the research questions presented in the introduction of this study.

The first research question I seek to address is: How and to what extent do participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs? I needed appropriate conceptual and theoretical frameworks that would relate to this question. First, I decided to use Bloome et al.'s (2005) concepts of intertexuality, interdiscoursivity, and identity as analytical tools in the study. These concepts are used throughout the study. I also use a social semiotic conceptual framework within this cross-cultural milieu. Social semiotics, which will be discussed more extensively later on, focuses on negotiated meanings of texts and signs within sociocultural contexts. Therefore, the need to use social semiotics as a conceptual framework in this study is apparent. It is also apparent that critical theory has shaped my question and the focus in this study. However, critical theory is a very broad theoretical framework, so the review of the literature focuses on critical theory and pedagogy associated with popular culture, which relates directly to the study and my research questions.

The second research question I raise is: In what ways do the conversational structure(s) of the group impact learning during negotiations of popular textual meanings? Sociocultural theory provides a framework that relates directly to this question. Specifically, instead of providing more traditional cognitive approaches to language learning, sociocultural theory looks at how meaning is constructed within social contexts such as interaction and negotiation. However, sociocultural theory is also a broad theoretical framework; therefore, my review of the literature focuses more specifically on sociocultural theory related to popular culture.

My final research question is: What pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts? While sociocultural theory also provides a relevant framework for this question, I look at literature that focuses more specifically on the use of popular culture texts for language and literacy development and the implications of doing so.

Bloome's Constructs of Intertextuality, Interdiscoursivity and Identity

In this study, I use the constructs intertextuality and interdiscoursivity to discover meanings participants constructed of signs embedded in the texts used in the course. According to Bloome et al. (2005), intertextual and interdiscursive connections "need to be interactionally proposed, acknowledged, and recognized, and they must have social significance" (p.144). Intertextuality can occur among a variety of texts that can include written and conversational texts, among others (Bloome et al., 2005, pp. 40-45). Intertextuality occurs when two or more texts are juxtaposed (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 40). Bloome et al. (2005) state that interdiscoursivity is "the relationship among

institutional discourses, most notably the penetration of one discourse into another or the encapsulating of one discourse within another" (p. 144).

Intertextuality can mean that texts are juxtaposed at different levels. For instance, texts can be determined to be juxtaposed or intertextual at the lexical level, the grammatical level, or the genre level. My focus will primarily be on the genre level; however, in my microanalysis of the data these levels cannot be clearly delineated. Texts can also be determined to be juxtaposed through "semiotic forms and symbols" (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 144), a specific focus in the data analysis in this study, as well as the focus of the next section of the literature review. Thus, the connection between semiotic forms and texts is important. As Thibault (1991) puts it, "Text, defined semantically, is, in turn, the realization of some higher-order social semiotic" (p. 119). In the analysis, I also look at "intertextual" connections through content (Bloom et al., 2005, p. 144), although 'content' in the study is of various form.

The concept of intertextuality can be applied at various levels and in different ways. For instance, it can mean using one text to reference another text, connecting a present text to a historical text, or connecting a text to other texts as genre (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 40). In my analysis, I look at how the participants socially construct, through interaction, intertextual connections. In order to claim a socially constructed intertextual connection, as stated earlier, I use Bloome et al.'s (2005) concept, the understanding that an intertextual connection "must have been proposed, acknowledged, recognized, and have social consequence" (p. 41).

Historically, conversations in academic discourse about intertextuality have focused on written texts. However, Bloome et al. (2005) suggest that 'texts' can take a

variety of forms, such as electronic texts, conversational texts, graphs, and pictures, among others (p. 40). In the analysis in this study, I also use 'text' to mean a variety of forms.

In my analysis, I also use interdiscoursivity as a construct. As mentioned, "Interdiscoursivity refers to the relationship among institutional discourses" (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 144). I analyze how the participants, through the sharing of their interpretations of discourses, negotiate meaning and jointly construct discourse(s) through interaction. For interdiscursive connections, I look at discourses, constructed through interaction by the participants, that relate to social institutions "such as schooling, law, church, family, and so on" (Bloome et al., 2005, p.144). Interdiscoursivity, as described by Bloome et al. (2005), refers to the interconnectedness between institutional discourses (p. 144). This interconnectedness between discourses is described as a struggle by Thibault (1991), as social discourses "constantly try to anticipate, respond to, silence, co-opt, dominate, and subvert" (p. 144). This dynamic is part of the analysis of the data. For example, in the first excerpt in this chapter, discourse about the 'purity' of international athletics is subverted by or conflicted with discourse related to international corporate entities.

Intertextuality and interdiscoursivity are constructed in the analysis as two separate categories; however, I do not consider the two constructs to be clearly delineated. A given text is constructed socially within the influences and social practices of various social discourses (Thibault, 1991, p. 120).

In my analysis, identities are conceptualized as social constructions (Bloome et al., 2005, pp.105-106). That is, the focus of the analysis in the study is not on 'given'

identities, but on identities constructed "within the setting and event and with the people involved" (Bloome et al., 2005, p.106). Within this conceptual framework, the social situation determines who someone is; therefore, the concept of identity is "dynamic" within social contexts. In addition, social constructions of identity are negotiated within social groups (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 103). Specifically, these negotiations are ongoing and dynamic, and in the process, identities "are claimed, contested, and defended" (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 120). It is this construct, as defined here, that I use in the study, in particular in chapter six, in which I focus on participation structure, a common practice in discourse analysis because "it is through the use of language that people name, construct, contest, and negotiate social identities" (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 103). Thus, these identities are often negotiated and contested, which becomes part of the analysis (Bloome et al., 2005, pp. 101-105). Therefore, I take a close look in the study at how participation structure(s) change over time by looking at the "dynamics of social identity" (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 101).

Social Semiotics

Social semiotics is the study or theory of meaning making within communities. The foci of the social semiotic framework deal with "systems of meaning making resources, their patterns of use in texts and social occasions of discourse, and the social practices of the social formations in and through which these textual meanings are made, remade, imposed, contested, and changed from one textual production or social occasion of discourse to another" (Thibault, 1991, p. 6). Since meaning making is fundamental to language and literacy development, using a social semiotics framework

could be conducive to literacy and language development (Kramsch, 2000, pp. 139-140; Lemke, "Literacy and Social Semiotics"). Thus, social semiotics is concerned with the analysis of signs embedded in texts constructed within sociocultural contexts. That is, the focus of social semiotics is on the construction of meaning of signs by sociocultural communities. Just as I use Bloome et. al.'s (2005) concept of intertexuality for the analysis of the data, social semiotics provides a useful and relevant theoretical construct as background for the analysis. Social semiotics also helped shape my pedagogical strategies for the study. For example, I had the participants offer their interpretations of meanings of signs embedded in various texts throughout the duration of the course.

To increase critical awareness when using popular culture texts in the classroom, it is useful to use a social semiotic approach because students can focus on meaningful signs in the texts for analysis (Garnsey, 1997). If, for example, the pedagogical focus is on making meaning of signs in relationship to trying to decode the commercial or political interests and ideologies behind the signs, this, in my view, enhances critical awareness and academic literacy (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, p. 9). In short, a sign in the culture takes on meaning in the context of social, economic, and historical forces, and will vary in different contexts. This is why the use of popular and other cultural texts is relevant and important in the classroom, and why this ultimately facilitates the development of literacies, including academic literacy.

Historically, semiotics has been considered closely related to structuralism (Seiter, 1992); however, in recent years the theory and practice of semiotics has taken on more of a sociocultural bent. In other words, those who use semiotics use it within a more interpretive, socio-cultural framework. Maasik & Solomon (2003) state, "As a

conceptual framework, semiotics teaches students to formulate cogent, well-supported interpretations. It emphasizes the examination of assumptions and the way language shapes our apprehension of the world" (p. viii). To use semiotics with more of a sociocultural lens allows an interpretive approach to analysis. It also provides an opportunity to look at ideology and power along with cultural mythologies to ascertain cultural values, beliefs, and mores (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, pp. 9-14).

Another basic concept of social semiotics is that history influences the meaning of signs, that transformations occur in either linguistic or pictorial 'signs' over time. This is not to say that 'structural' semioticians such as Saussure didn't recognize transformations in meanings of signs, it is that socio-historical influences are emphasized within social semiotics (Hodge & Kress, 1988, pp. 30-36). It was seminal thinkers such as Voloshinov who focused on 'social forces' in "exploring the nature of the process of signification" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 22).

Voloshinov, influenced by Bakhtin's school of thought, is given credit for transforming the field of semiotics by rejecting much of Saussure's concepts because of the lack of ideology and other social dimensions (Hodge & Kress, 1988, pp. 18-21). Traditionally, semiotics was looked upon as being 'static,' which doesn't take into account social processes and historical forces. From a social semiotic perspective, signs, which are embedded in texts and discourses, take on meaning in the context of social institutions and other social contexts and processes. Texts and discourses are dynamic, and, therefore, from a social semiotics framework, signs change meaning as discourses change (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 6; Thibault, 1991, p. 121). In addition, signs are often combined into larger configurations to take on different meanings through association,

and a given sign can take on different meanings across different texts and discourses (Thibault, 1991, pp. 129-133). It is within this framework that I wished to analyze how individuals outside a culture could begin to gain access to texts and discourses through (re)interpretation of signs. This could be conducted, I believed, through introducing to learners from one culture (Iranian) texts from another culture (North American), where a critical analysis of signs could be initiated.

A concept within the social semiotic framework is that of 'sign mediation,' which occurs during negotiation by those in a communicative event (Kramsch, 2000, pp. 138-139). However, this can be challenging in cross-cultural interactions. For instance, alphabetic characters are signs that represent phonemes at one level, but other cultures, such as the Aborigines, can, and have, interpreted these 'signs' in other ways (Van Toorn, 2001). In this study, I focus on looking at the process of 'mediation' or negotiation between the participants and the teacher as they negotiate the meaning(s) of signs embedded in texts and discourses.

Signs are embedded in discourses. Signs in texts relate to various sociocultural and socio-political discourses (Hodge & Kress, 1988, pp. 8-12). People within communities generally understand these 'metasign systems,' in fact, it is these metasigns that create cultural and linguistic communities, because people within these communities understand their 'metasign systems,' whereas those outside the community do not. Nonetheless, that has not kept people from different cultures from engaging various signs whether or not they understand the meaning of them.

Sports 'signs' or 'logos' have changed meaning because of the influence of marketing and global capitalism; for example, wearing the logos of a particular sports

team doesn't necessarily mean close affiliation with a particular team or set of players (Bishop, 2001). The fact that one of my participants was wearing a New York Yankees baseball cap without any idea of its meaning (until being confronted by a Red Sox fan at his work) supports this. Buying logos or signs related to sports teams has become, according to Bishop (2001), more of an act of consumption and prestige rather than allegiance to a particular team and emotional attachment. Widespread marketing of these signs or logos around the world not only brings in more money, it creates 'fans' beyond geographical boundaries (Bishop, 2001, pp. 24-27).

A particular 'accent' can be defined as a 'metasign system,' and accent is what often delineates sociolinguistic communities. An example would be the use of 'r,' or lack of it, in various speech communities. For linguistic signs, there are signs that signify particular grammatical meanings such as the plural 's' or the past tense morpheme 'ed' in English. People who don't acknowledge these linguistic signs, or are unaware of them, become outsiders of the sociolinguistic community. Therefore, 'sound signifiers' are critically important for social group formation and identity; they can be based on race, ethnicity, gender, and class, because they delineate sociolinguistic groups (Hodge & Kress, 1988, pp. 82-86; Holmes, 2001). These linguistic signs are crucial for access to cultural and linguistic communities. In addition, other linguistic signifiers, such as terms of address, also take on meaning in social contexts, often in terms of social power (Hodge & Kress, 1988, pp. 37-52). Thus, in social semiotics, sociocultural contexts are crucial in understanding signs, linguistic or pictorial. Within this framework "language is not a formal, rule-bound system but a resource for making, realizing, and enacting context-dependent social meanings" (Thibault, 1991, p. 119). It

is this broad approach to text analysis that makes social semiotics valuable as a conceptual framework for the development of literacies. "Social semiotics seeks to explicate how we make meaning with all the resources at our disposal: linguistic, pictorial, gestural, musical, choreographic, and most generally actional" (Lemke, "Multimedia Semiotics"). In the study, I focus on the analysis of participants' interpretations of both linguistic and pictorial signs embedded in texts and discourses to provide opportunities to discover how these negotiations of meaning impact learning.

The process of analyzing non-linguistic signs for the purpose of generating texts, in, for example, a composition classroom, can provide students useful practice in becoming part of an academic discourse community. This practice can transfer to academic communities across the curriculum, including scientific communities (Lemke, "Scientific Literacies and New Multimedia Genres").

In the analysis, I seek to discover how texts are culturally negotiated through social interaction. In other words, I look at how 'signs' are used as a tool to develop new concepts through a 'transactional zone,' in which new texts are developed through social interaction (Smagorinsky, 2001). I analyze the interpretive processes the participants go through, as discovered in the data, as they negotiate meanings of signs embedded in popular culture texts. It should be pointed out that a sign can be looked upon as a text, and vice-versa. Therefore, in the analysis, I often use the terms text and sign interchangeably.

People from different cultures (outsiders) have different sociocultural backgrounds and contexts; therefore, as they engage new discourses, they face the particularly challenging task of acquiring background information in order to

understand how particular signs are perceived within a particular speech community. The processes that a language learner goes through when interpreting signs within a new linguistic/cultural framework are important in language learning. In fact, Kramsch (2000) suggests that we view a "language learner as someone who creates new signs by manipulating signs created by others" (p. 152). Therefore, I seek to discover what pedagogical challenges and affordances become evident as the participants engage unfamiliar popular texts.

It was my belief going into this study that the participants had some access to American popular culture texts in Iran, which may have provided a bridge for the development of literacies needed for their present sociocultural worlds. In the study, I observe and analyze the challenges that the participants face as they engage new signs within new discourses. I achieve this end through the use of both popular and other cultural texts, because within these texts are embedded signs that offer the participants opportunities to (re)interpret and (re)negotiate meaning.

It is my contention that the use of social semiotics as a conceptual tool is invaluable in this study. Specifically, the use of a social semiotics framework in a cross-cultural setting is valuable because of the emphasis on (re)negotiation of meanings of signs embedded in texts and discourses. It is my purpose in this study to introduce new discourses to learners who are in the process of entering a new community where these discourses exist, and allow them the opportunity to (re)interpret and (re)construct meanings in the discourses. "One could say that L2 [second language] learners, through the use of a foreign semiotic system, have the possibility of putting a new context or

semiotic frame around past events, and thus of preparing a new frame within which to interpret future events" (Kramsch, 2000, p. 138).

In the study, I use the terms 'text' and 'sign' broadly; specifically, in addition to print texts, 'texts' or 'signs' can include lyrics from music, texts from television, and pictures, among other sources. It is these 'signs' and 'texts' that the participants engage, (re)construct, and interpret that become the focus of my analysis.

In order to operationalize the analysis in the study, I have decided to use specific analytic tools devised by David Bloome et al. (2005) as a way to analyze how the meanings of signs embedded in texts and discourses in a cross-cultural milieu (social semiotics) are interpreted and negotiated. This is explained in specific detail later on in the 'research framework' section of the dissertation.

In sum, it is clear from the brief review about social semiotics that 'signs' are embedded in texts and discourses (Thibault, 1991; Hodge & Kress, 1988). Therefore, as I focus my analysis on how the participants interpret and negotiate the meaning of signs embedded within and connected to texts and discourses, opportunities to observe meaning making events become present. Furthermore, since the participants (I include myself, the teacher, as a participant) come from two different cultures (Iranian and North American), the study provides ample opportunities to look at the interpretations of meaning of signs in intertextual and interdiscursive ways as participants engage texts related to the popular culture.

Popular Culture, Critical Theory, and Related Pedagogy

It is widely accepted that forces outside the classroom impact literacy practices and strategies. For instance, the level of resources and assistance depends on the priority level that local, state, national, and global, government agencies place on literacy development. It is social, political, and economic conditions that affect literacy development to a greater degree than issues related to method. As Luke (1998) states, "Literacy education is, by definition, always a social and political matter, tied up with the distribution of power, knowledge, and competence in increasingly complex and difficult economic and cultural conditions" (p. 311). The constructs that I use in my analysis, intertexuality, interdiscoursivity, and identity, are influenced by power relations, which are manifested during social interaction. That is, when people negotiate meaning during interaction, and they are making intertextual and interdiscursive connections, social power influences the process (Bloome et al., 2005, p. xvi).

Critical theory and critical pedagogy address how social and cultural issues are influenced by power in education and outside of education. Critical theory looks at how power in society impacts individuals and communities; critical pedagogy focuses on strategies in education that can empower students, particularly those students who are considered 'oppressed' in a given society. In this study, I do not conceptualize power as a static product. Rather, I conceptualize power as a dynamic process (Bloome et al., 2005, pp.162-164) that influences identity in dynamic ways, such as when the participants negotiate positions, 'knowledgeable authority,' for instance, from one moment to the next.

Proponents of critical theory and critical pedagogy tend to believe that practices inside the classroom should enable students and teachers to understand "the relationships among culture, ideology, and power" (Tejeda et al., in press, p. 33). Issues related to power and oppression became important in the discourses constructed in this study, because the participants come from an oppressed community in Iran, which is discussed in more detail later. One of the goals of this research is to discover how and to what extent the participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and *critical* through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs.

It is the empowerment of learners that is a key issue for literacy development, particularly from a critical perspective. This means giving voice to those students and communities that have traditionally been 'silenced.' From a critical perspective, some discourses and 'dialogues' are valued, while others are silenced. Those discourses that are valued come from communities that have power, while those that are 'silenced' come from communities that have historically been disenfranchised (Delpit, 1988; Hall, 1997). Specifically, there are codes and rules that form a 'culture of power,' and this form of power relates to languages and discourses. It also relates to which rhetorical patterns are accepted, and which ones are not. This is certainly relevant to the issue of acceptance and non-acceptance of genres and content from the popular culture.

The use of popular culture as content in classrooms may be challenged in certain arenas by political forces that prefer content from traditional canons. Nonetheless, content or texts that relate to practices and knowledges of historically disenfranchised communities can enhance access (Luke, 1998). In other words, strategies need to take into account the needed literacies of students within the context of their communities

and sociocultural realities. I decided to use popular texts in the study because such texts relate to the sociocultural communities that the participants in the study are struggling to enter. Learners will not only use literacies for the workplace, "[t]hey will use literacies to shape their values, ideologies and identities, and to design and redesign the practices of civic and community life" (Luke, 1998, p. 306).

The use of popular culture, and the critical analysis of media that produces popular culture, offer an opportunity for learners to look critically at values, ideologies, and identities. From a critical perspective, literacy development is contingent upon empowerment of learners. For instance, Westmoreland (1997) gives an example of discussing a movie, "Out of Africa," from a critical perspective. Specifically, she and her students noted in their critique and analysis of the film that Africans, who were participants in the movie, were not even included in the movie credits. There is also value in having students critique popular culture texts that offer students the opportunity to see how women are often positioned in a way that depicts subjugation (Westmoreland, 1997). This was accomplished in this study, and the results are reported later.

Using popular texts in the classroom often lends itself to critical analysis. This became apparent in this study as critical discourses were jointly constructed by the participants that related to gender and social class, among other areas. It is the critical analysis of popular and other cultural texts, and the critical awareness of the institutions that produce such texts, that many in the field claim to be invaluable, and it is important to this study.

Under the umbrella of the critical theoretical framework is the closely related area of critical media literacy. Critical media literacy "has to do with providing individuals access to understanding how the print and non-print texts that are part of everyday life help to construct their knowledge of the world and the various social, economic, and political positions they occupy within it" (Alvermann, Moon, & Hagood, 1999, pp. 1-2). This conceptual framework views literacy as a sociocultural practice, and frames literacy in terms of power (Alvermann et al., 1999, p. 3).

Critical media literacy theorists tend to differentiate between mass culture and popular culture. Mass culture is considered to be cultural products produced by consumer-oriented capitalism. Whereas, popular culture is seen as being developed by communities of people, often adolescents, who take and creatively manipulate aspects from the mass culture and make it their own (Alvermann et al., 1999, pp. 2-3; Willis, 1990). For example, different adolescent communities often identify and develop community around various aspects of popular culture, such as music, fiction, sports, clothes, etc. In this study, popular texts were chosen for the class that related primarily to music and sports.

Through the analysis of advertising learners can develop awareness about the power of media on their lives. As Burley (1997) suggests, "Examining advertisements enables students to begin to see how many of their beliefs have been shaped and reinforced by those groups with power" (pp. 38-39). Through analysis, evaluation, and reflection, students can begin to develop the ability to decipher cultural codes, which is a focal point of critical media literacy (Burley, 1997; Buckingham, 2003). Advertising

texts were introduced to the participants in the study with the purpose of providing opportunities for developing critical discourse.

To be media literate in a critical sense requires "teaching people to be critical consumers of entertainment and advertising fare, and teaching them to gain more insight and information from what they watch" (Desmond, 1997, p. 23). To be critical consumers means understanding how media audiences are targeted and addressed vis-à-vis socio-cultural factors such as economic class, ethnicity, gender, etc. In short, critical media literacy "requires a broader understanding of the social, economic, and historical contexts in which texts are produced, distributed, and used by audiences" (Buckingham, 2003, p. 49).

There are those who argue that visual images should not be part of literacy development, and that focusing on visual images doesn't develop the imagination. Thus, they feel that media literacy is not nearly as valuable or as important as print literacy. Some suggest it is a threat to more traditional concepts of literacy. As Garrett-Petts points out, "The association or intermixing of photography and narrative (or vernacular culture's images and high cultural texts) presents a potentially disruptive challenge to the hegemony of word over image" (1997, p. 80). Historically, those institutions and individuals that have traditionally 'granted' legitimacy towards certain genres and literacies such as 'literature' or classical music, have often, in a sense, disenfranchised other 'art' forms that have comprised popular culture. I would argue that the inclusion of visual materials into educational settings develops literacy. By only valuing certain traditional forms of print literacy, and diminishing or marginalizing the importance of media literacy and other areas related to popular culture, there is the danger of creating

an "artificial discourse community" (Garrett-Petts, 1997, p. 87). By expanding the traditional notion of 'composition' to include the development of literacies that include mass media and aspects of popular culture, such as music videos, it not only relates the classroom more to the sociocultural worlds of learners, it can facilitate awareness of powerful forces that impact their everyday lives (Lane, 1997, p. 103). Therefore, I include in the study 'texts' in various forms as content, including visual texts such as videos and television.

In the United States, there has been opposition to the development of media literacy and media education, because, as previously mentioned, many people feel that the analysis of elements within media such as popular film and television are not worthy of study (Rockler, 2002). This tendency to reject critical analysis of popular texts in pedagogical contexts presents a surmountable obstacle in using popular texts in the classroom. Unfortunately, people who do critically analyze popular texts are, in fact, often met with derision. For example, the media derisively criticized a psychologist when she analyzed race and gender roles in *The Lion King* (Rockler, 2002, p. 17).

Media education does not prescribe a particular 'canon'; it is flexible so that content can relate to student interest. This is important because what is 'popular' to one group of students may not be 'popular' to another. It should also be noted that the passage of time is a big issue when using popular texts; what was popular a few years ago may not be popular now. This becomes evident in an excerpt from the data in this study, and its impact can be seen in the conversational structure of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings.

What is clear to many is that media and popular culture have an enormous influence on people, including young people. As Urban (2001) suggests, "in contemporary America, the workshop of kinship is often not the family but the film studio – or the sites for other disseminated culture, such as the music recording studio or the publishing house" (p. 55).

Critical cultural studies is a related conceptual framework that has played an important role in regards to the use of popular texts as content in the area of literacy development. This is particularly true in the United Kingdom; in fact, critical cultural studies and British cultural studies are sometimes used interchangeably in some contexts. A critical cultural studies perspective "values the media as resources for making sense of the world and aims to mobilize the informed or unofficial knowledge young people derive from their media consumption" (Bragg, 2002, p. 42). Critical cultural studies is concerned with power, race, class, gender, and other socio-cultural issues, as is critical media literacy. In short, critical cultural studies focuses on power relationships between institutions and communities and the cultural meanings derived from these relationships, particularly in materially or technologically advanced societies (Fiske, 1992).

A cultural studies framework can enhance literacies by focusing on penetrating questions related to gender, politics, race, economic issues, etc., which relate to various literacies across academic curricula (Penrod, 1997, p. 18). In other words, it is often thought that the process of looking at questions related to the aforementioned sociocultural areas allows learners to develop a deeper and broader understanding of their sociocultural worlds, and therefore enhances their print and non-print literacies,

and prepares them for various discourses. It is also thought that this approach can offer learners a way to look at what they do in their everyday lives, such as engaging in consumption of cultural products, as well as a way to engage with cultural resources in meaningful ways to make sense of their worlds (Maxson, 1997; Willis, 1990). Having students engage texts related to "race, class, gender, and sexuality helps them to explain more thoroughly and precisely cultural identities and texts, and provides them with a window from which to see the power relations that construct such texts and identities" (Garnsey, 1997, p.57). It is also thought that a cultural studies framework will enable students to contemplate their own political positions, which could lead to more sophisticated rhetorical strategies (Gray-Rosendale, 1997). In the study, the participants engage texts in the class and then construct new texts related to ethnicity, class, gender, and religion, which provides opportunities for critical reflection.

A strong argument in favor of using a critical cultural studies framework, in my view, is that it enables learners to develop an understanding of political and economic forces that impact their lives. For example, in a critical cultural studies approach, the issue of media concentration in the United States, and the massive power that it represents, could be discussed. For instance, "In 2001, six massive media corporations owned over 90 percent of the media in the United States – down from fifty corporations in 1983" (Rockler, 2002, p. 21). This oligopolistic situation could be discussed in class, and the economic, political, and sociocultural implications could be fully addressed. In fact, on several occasions the power of the media in the United States was a topic of conversation in class during this study, and it is a focus of the analysis.

There are other arguments in favor of using critical cultural studies as an approach in educational settings. For example, it can "lead students to recognize that the academic context includes knowledge making as well as knowledge dissemination" (Fitzgerald, 1997, p. 128). This can be achieved through engaging in meaningful conversations about power relationships in the media and popular texts, and engaging related texts through reading and writing. In addition, the use of texts from popular films can raise questions about the roles of cultural myths and legends, and the ways women and minorities are depicted (Fitzgerald, 1997). Using popular texts can be useful in making historical connections; for example, making a comparison between the Evil Empire depicted in the movie "Star Wars" and Nazi Germany. Analysis of popular culture genres, such as rock, and other forms of popular music, can help students understand the influence of capitalism on their sociocultural lives. Using popular culture under a critical cultural framework also allows learners to think of themselves as actively participating in their sociocultural worlds as opposed to passively receiving information in an educational setting (Weed, 1997, p. 25-28). This concept of critically engaging texts can be applied to various types of texts, such as music videos, where political agendas and cultural histories can be deciphered (Lane, 1997, pp. 106-109). As I designed the study, I kept these arguments in mind as I chose specific popular texts to use in the course.

However, educational practitioners and theorists have expressed warnings about using a critical cultural studies approach in the classroom. For instance, they warn about having discussions about popular texts where 'consumerist' views dominate the conversation such as 'I like' or 'I don't like,' in lieu of critical analysis and critical

inquiry about the topic. I took this into consideration when designing the study. Thus, when I chose popular content for the class, I didn't emphasize what is 'trendy,' but what could provide opportunities for students to explore political, social, and other structures that are critically relevant. Specifically, the focus of the study is to discover how discourses are constructed by the participants that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular texts and signs.

According to some in the field, learners can get lost in the entertainment of popular texts, which can sometimes obscure the deeper social, political, and historical aspects that provide opportunities for critical reflection (Penrod, 1997, pp 5-10). A challenge in the classroom can be to convince learners that popular texts have significant, deeper meanings that relate to race, gender, class, and powerful ideologies. I kept this in mind when designing the study, and I believe the findings show that the participants in my study did develop discourses that were critically meaningful through interaction with popular texts.

From a critical cultural studies perspective, those who are not in positions of power are often positioned by the media in 'negative' ways. Thus, how one 'reads' popular texts through the mass media depends on how one is positioned. Thus, how one views media "becomes a process of negotiation between the viewer and the text" (Fiske, 1992, p. 292). In other words, how one 'reads' television, from a cultural studies perspective, depends on where one is ideologically, which depends in part on social group identity. Socio-economic class, gender, and culture will often determine how one views or 'reads' television. Since my participants come from a different country (Iran),

I feel that the findings of the research provide interesting perspectives in regards to how they 'read' television, which will be explored in one segment of the findings later.

From a critical cultural studies perspective, dominant ideologies of the powerful influence popular texts through the mass media. For example, ideologies such as individualism, social Darwinism, and patriarchy are pervasive. This study provides an opportunity to look at powerful ideologies from two decidedly different national cultures: the United States and Iran. This provides an interesting comparative context.

Critical theory and critical pedagogy are not clearly delineated from sociocultural theory. A sociocultural approach can and often does address the issues of social power. Sociocultural theory is also very relevant to the use of popular texts in the classroom; therefore, I will now turn my attention to it.

Popular Culture & Sociocultural Theory

If one accepts that popular culture has a pervasive influence on the sociocultural lives of young people, one could conclude from a sociocultural perspective that it can play a large role in the development of literacy for young people. It is this concept which has created interest in and the growing use of popular texts in pedagogical contexts. Sociocultural theory provides an important framework for the analysis of popular texts and the acceptance of popular texts for literacy development. The concepts of 'intertextuality' and 'interdiscoursivity' (Bloome et al., 2005) that I use as analytical tools in my analysis of the data are grounded in a broader framework that "can be described as a social linguistic or social interactional approach" (Bloome et. al., 2005, p. xv). That is, this approach "combines attention to how people use language and

other systems of communication in constructing language and literacy events in classrooms with attention to social, cultural, and political processes" (Bloome et. al., 2005, xv). This approach, then, falls under the broad theoretical framework of sociocultural theory, because it looks at sociocultural processes that influence and help shape language and literacy events. Therefore, the constructs that I use in this study fall under the broad umbrella of sociocultural theory.

Sociocultural notions of language learning and literacy development have been influenced by Vygotsky and Gee among others (Kern, 2000). As sociocultural theory developed, notions of language learning in the classroom changed. While not denying the necessity of acquiring the phonological, morphological, syntactical, and lexical patterns of the target language, sociocultural theory suggests that language and culture are interconnected. Therefore, activities in the classroom and beyond the classroom focus upon the learner becoming aware about the cultural history, cultural patterns, and cultural beliefs of the discourse community they are attempting to join. Gutierrez et al (1997) define a sociocultural view of literacy as "a theoretical view on literacy in which the role of language is understood as part of and inseparable from the socio-cultural context. This view highlights the interconnectedness of language, culture, and learning" (p. 369).

According to sociocultural theorists and practitioners, literacy practices exist within the context of social or cultural practices within a given community. Thus, there are various literacies, and learning a literacy means learning a Discourse, which, by definition, is an enculturation process into a given community (Gee, 1996; Kern, 2000). I feel that a holistic view of literacy development is necessary in that sociocultural,

linguistic, and cognitive factors all play a role in literacy development. What is important from a sociocultural perspective is that literacy is developed through meaningful social interaction.

What I am arguing is that communication and literacies transcend linguistics, although they are not separated from it. In order to join a discourse community you need to know more than linguistics; other 'Available Designs' are necessary to be able to be part of a discourse community (Kern, 2000). For example, it is important to understand a socio-historical framework to better understand a discourse community; although, this can be challenging for those who do not have a 'schematic background' or a socio-historical background, which is often the case for non-native speakers, including the participants in this study. Therefore, this concept has particular relevance for the development of literacies found in contemporary North American contexts for those learners who come from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The use of content from popular texts can help create schemata for young people, because it is part of their sociocultural lives, which makes texts more accessible, and because it provides opportunities for educators to develop socio-historical context. For instance, one could introduce earlier 'popular' musical genres such as the Blues and Jazz, as I do in this study, which can open up learning opportunities related to cultural history, particularly the cultural history of African-Americans.

In order for learners to access texts from a sociocultural perspective, there needs to be collaboration and interaction. There needs to be a social connection through communication because meaning is derived from our social and cultural backgrounds (Kern, 2000, pp. 43-49). Therefore, if content from the lives of adolescents and young

adults is used, then the content is meaningful and accessible, creating a powerful argument for including popular texts in the area of literacy development.

By understanding broad social, cultural and historical frameworks, schema is developed, which facilitates comprehension of texts. People who share similar social and cultural backgrounds tend to form 'interpretive communities.' Thus, meaning is derived within a social or cultural context (Buckingham, 2003).

Literacies are connected to sociocultural 'realities' according to sociocultural theory; they relate to social context, social purposes, and cultural texts. For instance, another reason why popular texts can facilitate the development of literacy is that television and other media have become the primary storytellers in our sociocultural worlds. In fact, many of the texts found in television, movies, and other forms of media "imitate the most traditional and simplest of storytelling situations" (Kozloff, 1992, p. 81). Therefore, these types of texts would have relevance for academic literacy from a sociocultural perspective.

Texts produced by mass media only become popular when sociocultural groups give the texts meaning within the context of social interaction (Fiske, 1992, p. 319). This concept suggests that mass culture produced by the mass media is taken by communities and they creatively and jointly develop their own popular texts through interaction, which is a central point of Willis' (1990) seminal work. The important point for the present argument is that popular texts become an integral part of the sociocultural lives of people through interaction, which, from a sociocultural perspective, is crucial for access to literacy. And, it is the ways participants negotiate

the meanings of popular and other cultural texts through interaction that is the primary focus of the analysis of this study.

Sociocultural theorists and practitioners believe it is important to treat literacy not as a skill to be mastered, but as a sociocultural process; a content-based approach to literacy that includes content that relates to the social worlds of the learners enhances that process. From a sociocultural perspective, it is clear that it is important to include the backgrounds of the students in the curricula. Popular content tends to be a part of the lives of most adolescents and young adults, at least in North American contexts, which supports the argument that this content be included in educational settings. It is also clear from the literature that sociocultural theorists believe that literacy development is dependent upon context, which meaningful content can provide for students. For example, Kern states, "Learning context-specific uses of reading and writing to accomplish particular purposes is what literacy is all about" (2000, p. 33). A content-based approach provides context along with the opportunity to provide meaningful and challenging activities and instruction (Gebhard, 2002).

Content-based instruction for learners is important also because it provides "opportunities for students to acknowledge and explore their own prior knowledge on issues, and provide[s] meaningful, contextualized language-learning situations" (Fitzgerald, 1993, p. 645). In a content-based approach, opportunities exist not only to make learning meaningful, but also to provide learners access to various socioeconomic worlds. For example, a content-based approach can provide valuable content from across the curriculum in an academic setting, as well as content from various professions. Content from the popular culture can provide opportunities for access to

literacy, particularly in a learner-centered classroom, where learners have choices in what content is used, as the participants in this study did.

From a sociocultural perspective, knowledge about a community and culture facilitates the development of print literacy (Kern, 2000, p. 175; Dyson, 1993). For example, in order to develop literacy in a particular discourse community, a learner must pay attention to style, because style varies from one community to the next, which impacts comprehension. Various styles of discourse open up different perspectives that once again relate to social, cultural, political, and historical factors (Kern, 2000, 90-91). Genres within popular culture may create access to various styles. For example, musical genres with particular lyrics may familiarize individuals with certain discourse communities, as mentioned earlier. It is hoped that through interaction with popular texts, the participants in this study will acquire knowledge about communities in which they are currently interacting.

Popular culture tends to produce a sense of cultural membership, which in turn produces social interactions that are crucial for language and literacy development. These 'cultural memberships' can revolve around sports, music, computer games, board games, artistic genres such as anime, etc. Thus, popular culture facilitates social interaction and often develops and even initiates cultural membership (Dyson, 1993, p. 106; Willis, 1990). However, for the most part, these collective interests are kept separate from the traditional academic world, even though adolescents and young adults, in all likelihood, spend a considerable amount of time involved in these various interests. My belief is that discourses and texts that are produced in these various communities can, in fact, relate to and develop academic literacies. In fact, I have had

experience with groups of students who have produced papers and multimedia presentations in which they were able to make connections among Japanese mythology, religion, history, and gender relations through the analysis of anime.

From a sociocultural perspective, culturally diverse classrooms or communities provide an abundance of opportunities to develop meaningful literacy events because various cultural histories and epistemologies are represented. However, in order to access these rich opportunities in culturally diverse classrooms, authentic discourse activities need to be developed to support literacy (Barnitz, 1994). Popular culture texts can provide such authentic discourse activities. Since the participants in the study come from a sociocultural background that is very different from the one they are currently in, there are opportunities to produce various meaningful literacy and language events.

As mentioned, background knowledge or schema is considered critically important within a sociocultural framework for developing literacy. It helps to contextualize texts, and facilitates comprehension for the learner. However, for learners who are newcomers to a culture, schema can be a challenge to develop. Kern (2000) defines schema in the following way: "A central tenet of schema theory is that people's existing knowledge is not a random assortment of facts, but rather is organized systematically in networks of knowledge structures called schemata" (p. 82). I would argue that content from popular texts could assist newcomers to a new community, particularly adolescents and young adults, because more often than not it is part of their background knowledge. When instructors utilize students' background knowledge, which comes from their sociocultural worlds, learning is contextualized for them (Paul, 2000).

It is critically important to be able to make intertextual and interdiscursive connections for language and literacy development. The ability to make connections across curricula has been defined as 'critical framing' (Kern, 2000, pp. 133-134, 140). These 'critical' connections are not only important in academic settings; they are just as important when a learner enters other environments, such as professional and vocational settings. Popular content can provide opportunities for 'critical framing' across various discourses in such disciplines as sociology, psychology, economics, political science, among others (Buckingham, 2003). In addition, it can provide access to discourses in vocational and social settings as well. It is also important for assessing what pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts.

The Use of Popular Texts for Language & Literacy Development

In sum, using popular texts as content in a classroom to develop language and literacy has many advantages. In educational settings, for example, critical analysis of popular texts can offer opportunities for students to analyze suggestive messages in advertising (Maasic & Solomon, 2003). Not only can this help develop academic literacies, it can also be advantageous for students outside the classroom in their daily lives as professionals and citizens. Nonetheless, popular culture has had, and still has, its detractors because it is not part of the traditional canon, though in recent years it has become more widely accepted. In the past it was excluded from the curriculum because of the perceived distinction between 'high' and 'low' culture. This perception and

delineation still exists in some sectors of academia; however, the use of popular texts in the classroom continues to grow (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, pp. vi-vii).

The use continues to grow because popular genres derived from cartoons, pop songs, video games, movies, sports, and even commercials contribute heavily to the content of discourses of young people. In fact, discourse communities even develop around different sectors of the popular culture, particularly among young people (Willis, 1990; Dyson, 1993).

It is an advantage to use content from the popular culture because "[s]tudents do not come to media texts as blank slates but as informed and experienced readers of media language and contemporary cultural codes" (Zaslow & Butler, 2002, p. 32), although this may not be the case for cultural outsiders, which is looked at in this study. Interaction with popular texts can also grant legitimacy to knowledge that learners bring to the classroom.

Popular texts are ubiquitous and influence virtually everyone to one degree or another; however, it would be hard to overestimate its influence on adolescents and young adults. In one study (Stevens, 2001), teachers used scenes taken from popular movies to create conversation about physics, which was possible because these films were filled with special effects. Thus, texts taken from the popular culture facilitated relevant conversations among students about relevant school concepts. In the same study, lyrics from songs were used to discover universal themes. Students were then asked to find the same universal themes in other types of texts, such as in books and movies, in order to develop critical reading and critical thinking. However, it should be noted that students had some difficulties connecting themes intertextually. Nonetheless,

the study shows how different academic literacies can be developed through the use of popular texts.

Use of popular texts, in addition to more traditional print texts, may help develop multiliteracies in areas that students have familiarity. Even at earlier ages, the use of popular texts, such as songs, movies, and rap, help facilitate literacy. Using popular culture texts in the curriculum can help contextualize content for students by making connections to their sociocultural worlds (Stevens, 2001, p. 549; Dyson, 1993, pp. 203-204; Kern, 2000, p. 214).

It is important to make connections with the communities that students come from to contextualize the content; this can be achieved through the use of popular texts, which can include a variety of genres, including horror fiction. When discussing the popularity of horror fiction, which is particularly popular amongst adolescents and young adults, Alvermann et al. (1999) cite Bakhtin's (1973) concept of 'carnival,' where 'rules and boundaries' are suspended for the pleasure of viewers and participants alike, much like during Medieval times or carnival in Brazil. In other words, horror fiction is an opportunity for adolescents to suspend feelings of being rule-governed, or feelings of powerlessness.

By using a genre that learners from an urban area were familiar with, rap, Paul (2000) was able to get her students to make connections with other texts from the more traditional canon such as Shakespeare and Dickinson (p. 248; Delpit, 1988, p. 491). Paul points out that because of the differences in culture, age, and economic standing between students and teachers, genres of texts that are valued in the classroom often differ to a high degree with those that are valued in the sociocultural worlds of young

people. Specifically, many middle-class, European-American teachers value Eurocentric texts, which are alien to most inner-city youth (Paul, 2000). While Eurocentric texts can be valuable in a multicultural classroom, efforts ought to be made to make more multicultural texts and genres available, particularly genres that students are familiar with, such as those found in popular texts. However, this may be challenging when you have learners from other countries, as is the case in this study, and presents a pedagogical challenge in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular texts.

What is 'popular' to one community may not be 'popular' in another. Instructors need to be aware of what their students embrace as popular, and not rely on their own ideas of what is popular, particularly if instructors come from a different community or generation than their students. In this study, the participants had input as to what texts would be used in the course. Nonetheless, one excerpt from the data indicated a pedagogical challenge when a particular genre was presented that could be considered 'older'; the participants had no familiarity with the content, which influenced the participation structure of the interaction.

Perhaps common interests can, in fact, create transnational interpretive communities based on common global culture. This interesting concept has merit, in my view, because of the rapid increase in the dispersion of popular texts globally due to technological breakthroughs in multimedia in recent decades (Willis, 1990). Thus, today it is common for Japanese adolescents and young adults to belong to discourse communities related to 'hip hop' and other North American genres, and for North American adolescents and young adults to form discourse communities related to

Japanese manga (comic books) and anime (animation). In this study, insight will be gained as to what degree popular texts from North America entered the participants' previous sociocultural lives in Iran.

As stated, the use of popular texts in developing literacies often works because of the familiarity students have with the content. I believe this is particularly true of students who come from discourse or dialect communities that have been traditionally alienated from academic discourses. While popular culture offers familiarity, it can also create opportunities to discover new ideas and content, as well as opportunities to attain access into various discourse communities.

Instructors, who use popular texts as content in educational settings, can develop assignments which enable the students to act as ethnographers in their analysis. In this way, they can discover new sociocultural worlds. When having students write about popular culture genres, we should allow the students to look at the material in new and exciting ways. As educators, we need to create opportunities that allow students to see content from popular texts, which they may have observed previously, with new lenses (Tweedie, 1997, pp. 30-37).

Since students are familiar with popular texts, they can "learn to focus on the social construction of texts and how texts are used rhetorically to reflect the values, positions, social relations, and histories of the community for which they are produced" (Penrod, 1997, p. 2). This is an advantage over using texts from, say, the 19th century, where students have little or no context; therefore, pedagogical opportunities are created.

Popular culture also can provide examples of narration and character development, which can be sophisticated in long-running, television series, for example. Analysis of such texts can develop competencies that can be applied to various other texts, including more traditional texts found in academic discourse. In fact, television series can offer many of the same components found in literature, such as conflict, theme, and foreshadowing, which an instructor can use to make connections when introducing students to literature (Porter et al., 2002).

Comic books have also been used as a way to promote reading amongst adolescents. In many parts of the world, comic books have been used to promote print literacy and political awareness, among other pedagogical objectives. Educators have used comic books in various parts of the world for such academic purposes as teaching literature, science, literacy, political science, and English. In South Africa, comics were used to enhance political literacy. In Germany, comics were used to teach adolescents about the 'Third Reich' as a way to combat racism and xenophobia amongst young Germans (Heath & Bhagat, 1997).

Nonetheless, sometimes students themselves challenge and resist the use of texts from the popular culture. When examining these texts in the classroom, a common complaint from students is that instructors are 'reading too much into it,' and that 'it's just entertainment' (Rockler, 2002). Value differences between teachers and students in relation to how popular texts are viewed can also create challenges. For example, based on generational, educational, and theoretical differences, adolescent girls often view romance shows and soap operas in positive ways, whereas their instructors may view these genres in negative ways. With these factors in mind, educators need to avoid

pedagogical approaches that produce a single 'correct' reading, or that suggest that the teacher possesses the only authoritative interpretation. As educators, we need to be open to myriad interpretations, and to understand that popular culture is perceived differently on an individual level, and that perception is influenced by gender, ethnicity, age, and other sociocultural factors (Buckingham, 2003, pp. 116-121).

Learners have to deal with many issues that relate to literacy and language; for instance, their social identities are being developed, and these identities can be vitally important for access to a variety of discourse communities. Thus, identity is connected to literacy. The type of identity that an adolescent or young adult develops within learning contexts is often determined by relationships with teachers and peers. In other words, how social relationships develop often determine one's identity and what literacies one has access to. Texts from popular genres often play a key role in the development of identities and literacies (Willis, 1990). Therefore, teachers play an important role, as do peers, in how learners begin to identify themselves as part of a discourse community where one participates in literacy events. Thus, identity is looked at in this study, as well as its impact on conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings.

Literacy development, particularly in academic contexts, needs to focus on reading critically, thinking critically, and questioning assumptions, including one's own assumptions. This can lead to the development of interpretive communities, which is a significant aspect of academic culture. Incorporating content from popular texts into the curricula can help achieve these ends, and also provides a framework to open up opportunities for students to interact with the texts critically, and to allow for various

interpretations. This, in turn, presents possibilities for the development of interpretive communities amongst language learners (Kern, 2000).

When using popular texts in the classroom, media literacy and media education become important because of the enormous role the media plays in the dissemination of popular culture texts throughout society. Critical media literacy, as discussed previously, plays an important role in making students aware of powerful influences present in their everyday lives. However, it could be asked, how does critical media literacy relate to developing literacies? I would argue that it presents enormous opportunities to develop critical reflection, reading, writing, and conversation about content that relates to gender studies, sociology, political science, communications, education, business, marketing, and cultural anthropology, amongst other areas. This study looks specifically at how the participants negotiate meanings of popular and other cultural texts, and how they make connections with other texts and discourses, and, in the process, engage in critical reflection.

Popular Culture and Global Youth Culture: A Bridge or Hegemony?

In a study conducted by several media scholars (Zaslow & Butler, 2002), adolescents from various countries, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, the United Kingdom, and the United States, produced various videos for other young adults in other countries. The participants in the study included twelve ethnically diverse adolescents from New York City, who observed and analyzed videos produced by adolescents from other countries. The study's purpose was to analyze communication across cultures and national boundaries amongst adolescents, in other words, to take a

closer look at global youth culture, to see how youth understand one another at a transnational level, through the production of popular media. The students in the study provided cultural analysis of the 'transcultural' videos. In the findings, it was reported that adolescents in the United States pointed out similarities across cultures, while the British adolescents claimed that the German youth were using American icons inappropriately. The adolescents in the study were able to understand videos produced in other cultures because, "[t]hey made familiar the unfamiliar by drawing on their knowledge of popular culture" (Zaslow & Butler, 2002, p. 36). Since the young people were familiar with many of the signs and symbols of the media texts produced in other countries, they were able to understand these non-verbal videos.

The study seemed to indicate that youth culture has become, in part at least, global, and communication and understanding occurred among young people from various countries because they were "making connections to and drawing on their own American media texts" (Zaslow & Butler, 2002, pp. 38-39). This creates some compelling questions. Are popular texts creating a global youth culture that can bridge historical animosities between cultures and begin to realize a global society? Or does it represent cultural hegemony, where popular culture produced by media in a few countries such as the United States and Japan dominate global youth culture and extinguish cultures and languages around the planet as many fear? Does it represent opportunities for change in a way where young people can create common identities? Or are adolescents developing a sense of unity supranationally through popular texts, and at the same time maintaining diversity by creatively using these texts in an intertextual way with their historical sociocultural worlds (Willis, 1990; Carroll, 2003;

Hall, 1997)? Based on my own experiences in other countries and in the United States, I tend to take the position that young people are using popular texts creatively and intertextually to maintain diversity. Yet, there is also a level of unity that develops amongst communities that share a common interest in various areas of popular culture. In my view, that can only be a positive in the long run.

There is no question that we live in an age of great transformation. Identities are in flux as we have entered a global era. The impact of global media on the identities of people around the world and the political processes of nations is great. The mass media and mass culture are also having a profound impact on traditional cultures around the world. Should we fear these changes or should we embrace them? Probably, we should do a little of both. Nonetheless, change is inevitable, and culture has always been dynamic.

Conclusions/Implications for Language & Literacy Development

People learn languages and literacies within social contexts, and texts are developed through various social worlds including community and school (Dyson, 1993). Since it is apparent that popular culture is ubiquitous in the lives of young adults and adolescents, it makes sense from a sociocultural perspective that texts derived from popular genres be used to develop literacy in educational contexts.

Content related to popular texts can open up sociocultural worlds that are stimulating, and worlds with which young adults can identify. Having content that is interesting, relevant, and schematically accessible reflects why the use of popular texts is an invaluable strategy for language and literacy development for adolescents and

young adults. The use of popular culture content, obtained through the media, can be a way to open up other sociocultural worlds to people who would otherwise not have access. In other words, television and other media provide content that allows the viewer to enter into various discourse communities that they otherwise would be unable to.

In some teacher education programs related to language and literacy, there is not enough emphasis placed on social and cultural issues, and too much emphasis on cognitive and linguistic issues, which often leads to more traditional literacy practices (Roskos, et al. 1998). I take the view that there is a need to include an examination of the role of popular texts in language and literacy development in teacher education programs.

Perhaps, in the future, more attention can be given to the role of popular texts in pedagogy in general. There are possibilities not only in the development of language and literacy, but also in areas across the curriculum. While other pedagogical areas outside of literacy development are beyond the scope of this paper, I think that the possibilities are there. It is my conclusion that the use of popular texts as a means to develop literacy has many exciting possibilities and will grow in the future, and it is a reason why I decided to use popular texts as content for the participants in this study.

Thus, after a review of the literature about the use of popular texts in educational settings, and through my own previous educational experiences, I am convinced of the pedagogical value of the use of popular texts for learners within the United States. However, as mentioned, there is a dearth of research about the use of popular texts for learners who come from sociocultural backgrounds outside the United States. This

study looks at how learners from abroad interact with popular texts from the United States, and, I hope, begins to address the question of what the pedagogical implications related to language and literacy are, when these learners do interact with these texts.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Setting

The setting for this study was in the participants' home, an apartment located in a small city in the Northeastern United States. The decision was made to hold the evening 'classes' in the participants' home because it provided a more relaxed atmosphere, which would facilitate authentic conversations for my data collection, and because it was convenient for the participants, who worked long hours during the day. The apartment complex in which the participants resided houses people who are low- to moderate-income, and who are racially and ethnically diverse, a diversity that generally reflects the demographics of the city in which the complex is located (mostly Latino, African-American, and European-American). The ground floor of the participants' apartment had a living room that was sparsely furnished with one large couch. There was a television connected to a DVD/VCR player, where several videos and DVDs were played during the study. In another corner, there was a computer, where the participants would often go online to visit websites. The dining room was an extension of the living room, and contained a large dining table, and there was enough room and chairs for all the participants and the teacher. It was at the dining table that the 'classes' were held, and conversations developed. Adjacent to the dining area was a small kitchen, where tea was often prepared and served during the 'classes.' Upstairs were two bedrooms, which the four participants shared. Thus, the physical setting was small, and the number of participants was small (four). Yet, the setting and the participants

provided the researcher with a comfortable space and a sufficient number of students for an in-depth, qualitative look at meanings constructed through negotiation of various texts.

I was able to gain access to this group through the oldest brother, Behroz, whom I had met earlier. For the purpose of confidentiality, I will not divulge the purpose or the place of the meeting except to say that it had to do with pedagogical matters. I became friends with Behroz, and I told him about my intentions to do a research project that would involve teaching a language class over the course of a summer. I asked him if he and his brothers would be interested in participating in such a study, and he responded positively. Behroz then consulted with his brothers, and they all agreed to participate, motivated primarily by their interest in receiving a free English class. However, they were made fully aware that the 'class' was part of a research project, and that I would have a dual role as both the 'teacher' and the 'researcher.'

My dual role as 'teacher' and 'researcher' had to be delineated. This required the need for a lot of self-reflection. During the process of self-reflection, I analyzed issues such as role conflicts, biases, and my lens as shaped by my North American culture, and how each might influence my roles as a teacher, a researcher, or both. One strategy that I adopted was to label any of the data that came from me 'Teacher,' as opposed to using my real name. This strategy was effective in that it created some omniscient space during my analysis; I was much less attached to my role as 'teacher' because of the change in identity. While having two roles in a research project is challenging, it provided me a setting that facilitated the acquisition of data that directly addressed my research goals and questions.

The course ran for a total of eight weeks, starting in June and ending in August of 2004, with a one-week break in the middle. The group met for approximately two and a half hours each Tuesday and Thursday night, about five hours each week. Thus, the group met for approximately forty hours, which resulted in approximately forty hours of audiotape. The dates of the class provided some unique opportunities for access to certain texts, such as the Democratic National Convention and the Olympic Games, which resulted in two excerpts from the data that were analyzed. Many of the texts used throughout the course came from the media, videos, contemporary magazines, television, advertising, sports, and newspapers. The texts were primarily 'popular' texts. The participants were routinely given handouts of texts before the next class to read, and then they were expected to engage in conversation about the texts during the class. They were expected to write in a journal, which was collected about every two weeks. In addition, they were asked to write two short papers. The first paper was a reaction paper, for which they were asked to react to some of the texts they were reading and talking about. The second paper was a reflection paper, required at the end of the course, for which they were asked to reflect on the reading, writing, and conversations they had engaged in, and how, in their opinion, each contributed to or didn't contribute to the development of their language and literacy proficiencies. The following chart gives a brief synopsis of the genres, themes, and corresponding modalities that the content related to and the participants engaged in during the course:

Table 1: Overview of Content in Course

Genre	Theme	Modality
Sports	Competition	Reading, Discussion, and Journal Writing
Sports	Cheating	Reading, Discussion, and In-class Writing
Sports	International Competition	Reading, Discussion, Video/ Television, In-class Writing
Music	Cultural History	Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Music	Contemporary Socio-cultural communities	Reading, Discussion, In-class Writing
Popular Videos	Cross-cultural Meanings of Popular Texts	Viewing, Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Criticism of Popular Videos/Movies	Critical Analysis of texts embedded in popular videos/movies	Viewing, Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Actors/Actresses	Popular Cultural Iicons	Viewing pictures, Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Advertising	Corporate Signs (Logos) in a Global Context	Viewing pictures (advertisements), Reading, Discussion, In-class Writing
National Signs (Symbols)	Nationalism	Viewing Photographs, Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Political Conventions	Nationalism/Political Discourse	Television Viewing, discussion, Journal Writing
Advertising	Nutrition/Weight Loss	Viewing pictures (advertisements) reading, discussion
Criticism of Television Shows	Critical Analysis of texts embedded in popular television shows	Viewing Television, Reading Articles, Discussion, Journal Writing
Comic Strips	Political and cultural texts embedded in comic strips	Reading, Discussion, Journal Writing
Family	Cultural concepts of family	Viewing Photographs, Reading, Journal Writing
Olympic Sports	Nationalism/Corporate Influences	Television Viewing, Discussion, Journal Writing

The content and the setting chosen for this course allowed me to collect data, audiotaped discussions and participants' writing, that related directly to the genres, themes, and modalities that are described in Table 1. The data was then transcribed and analyzed, enabling me to address my research questions.

Background of Participants

All four of the participants, who are brothers, grew up in a large city in Iran. The ages of the participants ranged from 21 to 30 at the time of the study. They spent most of their lives in their native city, before emigrating to the United States after being granted religious asylum. The brothers came at different times over the past several years. Behroz, the oldest of the brothers, arrived first, and Parviz, the youngest of the brothers, arrived most recently. The brothers came to the United States via several European and Asian countries. The participants in the study were given pseudonyms.

The participants' paternal grandparents lived in a village their entire lives and were of limited means. The participants' father moved to the city as a young man and 'built everything up,' as one of the participants put it. In other words, their father came from limited means and worked his way up to a managerial position at a bank at the time of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Right after the revolution, the new authorities fired him, along with thousands of other Iranian Bahá'ís in positions of authority, in their efforts to de-professionalize the Iranian Bahá'í community, of which the family was a part. As a result, the participants' father was forced to adopt a new occupation. He taught himself how to be a plumber, and plumbing remains his occupation today.

According to Behroz, the transition was "tough" for his father and the family, but his father has adapted and currently makes a modest income.

All four participants are Iranian Baha'is, and this designation is an important part of their identity. It is also the primary reason why the participants left Iran, because members of the Iranian Bahá'í community have limited opportunities. As Behroz put it, there are "only certain kind of jobs you can take." Specifically, Bahá'ís are limited to unskilled labor jobs or trades such as carpentry or plumbing. Before the revolution, there were many Bahá'ís who were professionals—engineers, medical doctors, dentists, university professors, and business professionals, among others. It was a prosperous community; however, currently, many are impoverished, having had their properties confiscated by the authorities, and having limited job opportunities. As Parviz put it, "They think if you keep poor some group, they can't grow up."

The oppression of Bahá'ís in Iran is not only economic. Behroz shared with me an event that happened when he was quite young. His family was visiting his grandparents in their ancestral village right after the revolution. One night, an angry mob had gathered and thrown stones at the grandparents' home. The grandfather was later arrested by local authorities and put in jail for awhile. Later on, their grandfather had to flee the village for his life, never to return, after he was almost immolated by an angry mob. All of this occurred because of his religious affiliation.

The reasons for the oppression are primarily theological; Bahá'ís are looked upon as heretics by the theocracy in Iran. The community has been persecuted in Iran since its beginnings in 1844, with different degrees of severity during the course of its history. A full review of the persecution of the Bahá'í community in Iran is beyond the

scope of this work; however, one can find information in articles published by the United Nations, Amnesty International, and other international organizations.

Since the revolution, one of the strategies those in power have employed to keep members of the Iranian Bahá'í community out of positions of prestige, status, and authority has been to strictly prohibit them from working in or attending any institution of higher education in the country. This has greatly impacted young people in the community, including the four participants in the study. As a result of this ban, a group of former Iranian Bahá'í college professors and other professionals, such as dentists, engineers, and accountants who had been fired from their previous positions, decided to start, on a volunteer basis, the Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education (BIHE) in 1987. The mission of the Institute was to provide secular learning, such as engineering, dentistry, accounting, law, literature, etc., to members of the Iranian Bahá'í community (Bronner, 1998; N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of the U.S., 1998).

Behroz passed a demanding entrance exam to become a student of the Bahá'í Institute of Higher Education, or 'Open University'. Therefore, he was one of a very small number of Iranian Bahá'ís with access to higher learning in Iran. Students who attended the Institute, like Behroz, learned mostly through correspondence and sometimes through attending classes at the private homes of instructors. The instructors, who looked upon their work as community service, worked to provide higher learning to members of a community who had been systematically denied access. The Institute, under pressure from government authorities during its entire existence, was shut down in 1998 by the authorities, and many of its instructors were thrown into prison. Supplies, equipment, and texts were also destroyed (Washington Post, 1998; Bronner

1998; N.S.A. of the Bahá'ís of the U.S., 1998). According to Behroz, the government authorities didn't take BIHE seriously at first, so they ignored it. However, when it started to grow and become known as a more effective institution of higher learning, the authorities began to "crack down." It is my understanding that due to international pressure from academics and governments from around the world the Iranian authorities eventually released the instructors from prison and allowed the Institute to reopen. According to Behroz, it still exists today, although it exists under very difficult circumstances, and it is forced to keep a very low profile.

Behroz was the only one of the four brothers who had some access to higher learning before coming to the United States, and he is also the only one of the four brothers to attend college in the United States so far. The experience at BIHE certainly benefited him; he graduated from a local college in electrical engineering with high honors and has entered graduate school in engineering. On a personal note, Behroz likes movies, nature, and music, although he doesn't play music, as his brother Parviz does.

Parviz has a passion for music and is a very accomplished guitar player, able to play both Middle Eastern and Western popular songs. He stated that he has an interest in a variety of musical genres, including U.S. country music. Parviz also shared with me that he took private guitar lessons while living in Iran. He was able to do this because the government authorities had liberalized rules about playing music in recent years. In the years right after the revolution, according to the participants, one could go to prison for even possessing a musical instrument. Even though playing music, particularly Western music, had become more tolerated by government authorities, it was not fully accepted. So Parviz's passion for music and playing in a band remained low key while

he lived in Iran. Before coming to the United States, Parviz worked as an assembler in a computer company and received some training to learn how to be a computer technician at a vocational school. Parviz plans to attend college in the United States in the future. Currently, he is employed at a cable company with Saeed.

When Saeed immigrated to the United States, he began working as a plumber, but then started working at a cable company with Parviz, as mentioned. In Iran, Saeed attended a high school with a vocational focus. As Bahá'í students are not allowed to attend Iranian colleges and universities, they are also steered away from high schools with academic tracks. After school, Saeed was drafted into the Iranian army, where he served a twenty-one month tour of duty. After his tour of duty in the army, he returned home to work in the plumbing trade with his father. Saeed's personal interest is traveling, which he wants to do more of in the future.

Merat also went to vocational high school, where he received training to be a mechanic. After high school, he was also drafted into the army and served a twenty-one month tour of duty. He was forced into an army unit with very dangerous and hazardous assignments, which included getting rid of unexploded ordnance, such as chemical munitions left over from the Iran/Iraq war. According to Merat, he was put into the unit simply because he was Bahá'í. Merat is an individual with a good sense of humor, who smiles most of the time. It is my belief that his ability to look for humor even in dark circumstances has served him well. Merat worked as a mechanic when he first came to the United States. He is currently training to become a tractor-trailer driver.

All the participants shared with me fond memories of family picnics, family vacations, and holidays in Iran. They shared fond memories of beautiful scenery in Iran,

and they all long for Iranian food. Their identities are connected to the nation of Iran and its people, although none intend to return anytime soon. Thus, these four young men who impressed me as smart, resilient, hardworking, honest, and wanting to make positive contributions to society will do so in the United States, which is Iran's loss.

Research & Analytical Questions

The primary focus of this study is to understand how these four, recent immigrants develop and negotiate meaning(s) of signs embedded in American popular texts and other cultural texts. There are specific research interests with related questions. First, I outline the broad research questions of the study; then, I discuss the more specific analytical questions that help focus and operationalize the research.

One focus of this study is to observe the processes that the participants go through as they engage the texts. Specifically, I want to discover how and to what extend do the participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs? In order to address this, I analyze the dialogue sessions to discover what it is that the participants question, restate, acknowledge, change, resist, or ignore. I observe how these learners from a decidedly different cultural background interpret American popular texts. And, I examine what texts and signs they draw upon from their previous sociocultural worlds as they construct meaning, when engaging texts from another culture, intertextually and interdiscursively.

A second focus of the study is to discover what pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on

popular and other cultural texts? Specifically, what are some of the difficulties and shortcomings of the approach, and what are some of the learning moments that occur during the process of negotiating the meaning of popular texts cross-culturally?

A third focus of the study is to find out how the conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings impact learning? This question also has implications regarding identity formation within the context of group negotiations, and it also has implications related to participation structure and level of interaction.

My analytical questions, which are related to my research questions, are the following: What meanings do the participants construct of signs embedded in popular and other cultural texts? Does the participation structure change over time? If so, how does it change, and why does it change? How does the sharing of cultural texts and discourses between the participants and the 'teacher' provide learning moments? Specifically, what are the meaning differences that are negotiated and become part of the joint discourse over the eight-week period of the course? These specific questions are designed for the purpose of operationalizing the analysis of the data for the purpose of acquiring insights related to the research questions previously stated.

The following chart, Table 2, connects the analytical questions to constructs, methods, and data:

Table 2: Analytical Questions

Analytic Question	Construct	Data	Method
What meanings do the participants construct of signs embedded in popular and other cultural texts?	Intertextuality & Interdiscoursivity Bloome	Transcripts of class interactions & Photographs/ images	Content analysis
Does the participation	Identity	Transcripts of	Analysis of

structure change over time? If so, how does it change, and why does it change?	Bloome	class interactions	participation structure
How does the sharing of cultural texts and discourses between the participants and the 'teacher' provide learning moments? Specifically, what are the meaning differences that are negotiated and become part of the joint discourse over the eight-week period of the course?	Intertextuality & Interdiscoursivity Bloome	Transcripts of class interactions, interviews & written student essays.	Discourse Analysis

Methods of Data Collection

I used qualitative research methods for the purpose of acquiring data for later analysis. The strategies that I used are commonly used for ethnographies. Specifically, I collected data through ethnographic field notes related to observation of 'classroom' participants (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995; Ely, Anzul, Friedman, Garner, & Steinmetz, 1991). The process of writing the field notes and the subsequent analysis of the field notes will be described in detail later on. I also collected data through audiotaping all of the classes as well as the personal interviews conducted with participants at the end of the course (Ely et al., 1991; Emerson et al., 1995). The audiotaping will be described next. In addition, I collected data from course materials, handouts, and written assignments completed by the participants during the course, which will be described in the subsequent content section. The content selection process

was conducted through a coding process, with the intent of finding patterns and emergent themes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Saville-Troike, 1996).

Audiotaping

I collected data through audiotaping classes, meetings, and individual interviews, which is a common strategy for collecting data in ethnographies (Ely et al. 1991; Emerson et al, 1995). I gave notice, formally and informally, before any audiotaping was conducted because I believe in full disclosure. I gained access, as previously stated, by discussing the project with Behroz. At that time, I shared with him my intent to audiotape all of the classes during the course for the purpose of collecting data. I explicitly stated in a participant consent form my intent to audiotape the classes, which all the participants signed before the start of the class. Thus, my dual role as a teacher and a researcher was explicitly understood by all of the participants from the start. I also audiotaped individual interviews at the end of the course because I wanted to get individual perspectives related to the course content. Although I had prepared questions for the interview sessions, the interviews became more 'open' during audiotaping. The prepared questions were constructed for the purpose of acquiring additional data that might address my research questions as well as to address specific findings that occurred in the study, such as the tendency of the participants to connect texts and discourses from their own sociocultural worlds with texts from the content of the course. The following are some examples of questions that were asked:

1) Through our discussions, did your interpretations of the texts change? How?

2) Did talking about your own Iranian culture help you to understand the conversations better? How?

3) Did reading and writing about American popular culture help you with English literacy? How?

4) Did sharing information about your own Iranian culture help you with English language and literacy development?

After I collected approximately forty hours of audiotaped data from the classes and the interviews, I began the process of transcribing the audiotaped data. The process of transcribing the data was time-consuming and laborious. I began the process in September 2004, and I finished transcribing the data in February 2005. At first, I transcribed virtually everything on the tapes that I heard. After several tapes of classes were transcribed in this way, I analyzed the data for emergent themes and critical moments and events (Saville-Troike, 1996). I also engaged in a coding process that helped me to decipher emerging themes and events (Coffee & Atkinson, 1996). I then listened to the rest of the tapes in their entirety; however, I became more selective and transcribed data that reflected the emergent themes that I had become cognizant of during the early transcribing and coding processes.

Content

The content of the course, delineated in Table 1, was comprised of the genres, themes, and modalities that were crucial for the data collection process. I collected materials used and produced in the class as part of the data collection process. The

content was primarily texts from popular culture, where the learners themselves had some input as to what specific texts were used. Most of the texts came from music, videos, contemporary magazines, newspapers, television, advertising, sports, and other media that comprise contemporary popular culture. For example, I obtained texts from newspapers, magazines and books, such as comics, articles, and reviews, that related to sports, music, and movies, among other areas. In addition, I had some visual texts, such as photographs, videos, and DVDs. I collected recordings of discourse (written and oral) produced when the participants actively engaged these texts.

Fieldnotes

I used ethnographic field notes to describe class experiences, and I engaged in a process of data selection for the purpose of gaining insights and understanding. The process of doing field notes is a process of interpretation. I established a note-taking process early on. Field notes, obtained by writing down certain hunches, ideas, and thoughts after each class about what had transpired, provided me with an opportunity to supplement my audiotaping (Emerson et al., 1995, pp. 4-22; Ely et al., 1991, p.69).

Context and setting determined when and how I wrote down notes. I was discrete about taking field notes, because I'm aware that note-taking can create separation and marginalization, which is why I wrote them immediately after the classes. I feel that field notes are an important supplement to audiotaping and videotaping, because they present an opportunity to record general impressions and feelings (Emerson et al., 1995, pp. 25-37; Ely et al., 1991, p. 72).

Through the act of taking field notes, I have collected data that I hope can help the audience to 'see' what was going on during the study. It is a strategy that captures key words and phrases that might become important for emergent analytical themes (Emerson et al., 1995, pp. 47-72).

Methods of Analysis

According to Geertz (1973), ethnographic research is an interpretive process. In this qualitative study, I disciplined my interpretative process by first engaging in a coding process to try to discover emergent patterns in the data. That is, I would jot down codes next to data drawn from field notes and transcriptions of audiotapes. Then I began to look for emergent themes and broader concepts from the codes (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996, pp. 26-52). For example, some of my codes related to rural life and urban life in Iran. I was then able to make connections to broader conceptual themes such as classism. Through the coding process, I was able to discover another theme in the data—cultural sharing. Thus, through the codification of the data, I identified conceptual themes. The coding process was used to select relevant data, and then the data was used to address my research questions (Coffee, Atkinson, 1996, p.48).

Individual interviews were conducted at the end of the course so that I could obtain individual perspectives related to the course and the data. In addition, I frequently asked cultural informants their perspective and opinions about the data and my interpretations. I also went back to the participants on a couple of occasions after the course to clarify their interpretations of meanings in the data. I engaged in these procedures to help triangulate my assertions (Erickson, 1990).

Cultural sharing was a prevalent activity discovered through the process of coding the transcriptions and field notes. Learning about cultural backgrounds, histories, literature, and the sharing of these discourses, contributes to learning in a multilingual/multicultural environment (Gunderson, 2000; Quintaro, 1994). Thus, I look closely at the sharing of cultural texts and discourses between the participants, which contributed to learning moments. That is, the participants often became centered in the discussions as the 'knowledgeable authorities,' and the class then provided the participants a venue to negotiate meaning of familiar texts and discourses with a cultural outsider. It was these negotiations of meanings of familiar texts and discourses that provided learning moments, as excerpts from the data will show. Specifically, the participants learned new meanings of texts and how to communicate in a cross-cultural context.

I also take a multimodal approach in the analysis. Specifically, I analyze how the participants make meaning out of the signs embedded in the texts, which were discussed through linguistic and visual means (Jewitt et al. 2001). Linguistic and visual texts are described for contextualization purposes during the analysis; however, the linguistic and visual texts are not the primary focus of the analysis. The participants' negotiation of the meanings of the texts is the primary focus of the analysis.

As stated, I focus on incidents of cultural sharing, or joint construction of cultural representations, in my analysis. In order to inform myself of these joint constructions of cultural representations, I negotiated my interpretations with the participants and cultural informants.

The importance of looking for thematic patterns in the discourse is critical in my analysis (Geertz, 1973; Lemke, "Analysing verbal data," pp. 4-5). As indicated earlier, I use sociocultural and critical lenses as I analyze the data. Specifically, I focus on social, cultural, historical, political, and religious discourses that appear to have influenced interpretations of signs embedded in the texts that we discussed in our dialogues. Discourses relate to institutions, such as religion, gender, politics, and nationalism. That is, there is religious discourse, gender discourse, political discourse, and nationalistic discourse. Discourses provide a framework or guide to what is possible to say that relates to "the meanings and values of an institution" (Kress, 1989, p. 87). It is through this interpretive process that I attempt to understand more deeply how the meanings of the texts were interpreted through a group process of negotiation. Lemke states, "Discourse analysis studies are often best when they examine a particular community in depth" ("Analysing verbal data," p. 8). In other words, as I searched for meanings that the participants constructed of signs embedded in the texts, I analyzed the content within this particular discursive context.

Thus, discursive context was considered important throughout the study. For example, as I scanned the data and went through the coding process I began to focus on discourses related to gender, religion and class, amongst others. I tried to become aware of ideologies and their influences on the discourses discovered through the analysis. In order to understand the influences of power and ideology on the discourses, context was considered a critical part in the meaning making process. In order to acquire context for my analysis, I needed to do some background reading and to talk with cultural informants. For instance, because of background reading and extensive conversations

with many Iranians, including the participants, I am aware that religious discourse is a source of power in Iran.

In order to enhance my understanding of the sociocultural backgrounds of my participants, I did background reading on political and religious discourses related to Iran, which facilitated my analysis (Momen, 1985; Yergin 1992). I also had numerous conversations with cultural informants from Iran. The background reading and conversations proved invaluable in the analysis. I learned that Shi'a Islam is the dominant religion in Iran. For example, in order to be a member of the Revolutionary Guard, a paramilitary organization that safeguards the current theocracy in Iran, you must be a Shi'ite Muslim. In fact, to have any power in the current theocracy, you must be Shi'a. If you are a member of a religious minority, you are often disenfranchised to one degree or another. I have already stated the ramifications of being members of a religious minority in Iran, which my participants were. Religious discourse, particularly after the Iranian Islamic Revolution that occurred in 1979, is critical to understanding what constitutes power in Iran. This is essential because "discourses are obviously not coherent in the abstract, but coherent-for-discourse-participants-in-some-communicative-situation" (Van Dijk, "From text to grammar" p. 4). These factors need to be recognized and acknowledged, because they do influence interpretations of texts and signs in this study.

Of course, discourses related to politics and history between the United States and Iran also have to be taken into account in the analysis in order to understand what Iranians think vis-à-vis American power and influence. It's a complicated issue, but it is clear to me from background reading and interaction with Iranians, including my

participants, that age is an important factor. For instance, those old enough to remember the 1953 overthrow of the democratically elected Mohammed Mossadegh by American and British intelligence services, along with conservative Iranian generals, and the subsequent installation of the Shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, often have a deep distrust of American power and influence (Yergin, 1992). Those who came of age during the 1979 Islamic revolution with the religious fervor, the subsequent hostage crisis that began with the takeover of the American embassy in Teheran, are also often leery of American power and influence. However, it is also clear that the majority of those born after the Islamic revolution, according to my participants and other cultural informants, have a much more positive view of the United States and its power—although the invasion of Iraq may have tempered that enthusiasm some. North American popular texts remain popular among young Iranians. However, age is not the only factor that influences how American power is viewed; religion, socioeconomic background, gender, family history and other sociocultural factors all play a role.

Thus, the focus of the analysis is on the negotiation of meaning of signs, linguistic and pictorial, embedded or contextualized within texts and discourses. In order to operationalize this analysis, I use Bloome's conceptual constructs of intertextuality, interdiscoursivity, and identity, as described in the literature review in chapter 2.

I focus my analysis on intertextuality and interdiscoursivity that developed during the group engagement of the texts. Specifically, I analyze the data to see if and how the participants and the teacher make connections among various cultural, political, religious, economic, and other institutional discourses in a cross-cultural milieu.

I also use identity as an analytical tool in my analysis. Specifically, I focus on "the dynamics of social identity" (Bloome et al., 2005, p. 101), which the participants experienced through group interactions. The purpose was to ascertain who became centered during the interactions and who became empowered during the interactions, and the reasons why. I take the position that social identities are dynamic and situated, although identity goes beyond just having a 'role,' and one becomes a particular social category such as a 'learner' or a 'teacher' in a given situation.

Thus, I utilize some of the categories and constructs that Bloome et al. (2005) have used in their microethnographic analyses, as described in chapter 2, the literature review. I feel that the stated categories, or boundaries, have helped me analyze the data and have provided a useful methodology to achieve the goal of providing meaningful interpretations of the data.

Validity Issues

Triangulation, which necessitates "using a variety of methods" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 93), is a key concept in qualitative studies for validity issues. I use triangulation as a strategy for validity purposes. I have made a conscious effort to be a reflective researcher, which is important for validity. In addition, I use the participants as cultural informants, as well as outside cultural informants, to check my interpretations of the data.

I use a variety of methods for data collection and data analysis. I recorded and transcribed interviews. I then compared the transcriptions with the field notes that I took during the study. I had the participants review interpretations of the dialogues for

agreement or disagreement. In addition, I relied on outside informants for their perspectives on the data. I used written assignments and reflections to ascertain whether or not my assumptions and interpretations were correct.

My intent to be a reflective researcher required me to examine such issues as my roles (as researcher and teacher/facilitator), conflicts, biases, and other issues that may have influenced how I represent the participants in the dissertation. When I analyzed the data, I made a conscious effort to keep in mind that I bring my own sociocultural background to the analysis—that my lens is largely shaped by my North American culture and background, which can and does affect my analysis and conclusions. Therefore, I often checked my analysis and conclusions by consulting with Iranian cultural informants, including the participants and then comparing their perspectives and interpretations with my own.

Since I am both the facilitator and the researcher in this project, the need for self-reflection is evident. I have made a conscious effort to be aware of the need to clearly delineate these two roles. For example, in an excerpt about the Olympics (Table 3, Excerpt 1), my role as 'researcher' was to point out errors in perceptions and interpretations that I made during my role as 'teacher,' which will be made explicit later on. It also needs to be stated that my analysis has limitations that are imposed by my own limited frame of reference. In my reflection, I have made a conscious effort to understand and reflect upon my role as an interviewer and how that influences the data.

I make explicit the data that supports my interpretations, and I make note of any discrepancies that do not support my interpretations. I am fully aware that my

representations of the interpretations of the participants will be open to interpretations by readers of the dissertation.

As stated, I have sought feedback from the participants and from people outside the study to 'test' my assumptions and interpretations. I anticipate that by obtaining 'member checks,' validity will be enhanced. Since my study involves a small group of Iranian participants, any generalizations from the analysis of the data will be considered an 'internal generalization' and will not be generalized beyond the group (Maxwell, 1996, pp. 86-98). Nonetheless, I have asked the participants, at times, to generalize about what they perceive to be Iranian perspectives on American popular culture.

Ethical Issues

My goal is to maintain complete confidentiality for the participants and the informants. I have done this by giving each of the participants a pseudonym, and I do not disclose the full name of any informant, although I do mention the first name of one informant (Maryam). I do not disclose other personal information in the study that might identify the participants or informants—for example, the name of the city that the participants grew up in. In short, I make a conscious effort to protect identities and insure privacy.

I obtained signed consent forms, and informed the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study if they wished to do so. I also let them know that they were free to consult with me about the study, and that they would have access to the study once it is completed.

I am also very conscious of the fact that the demographic group I am studying—young Middle Eastern adults—is a particularly vulnerable group at this time because of geo-political reasons. I have remained conscious of their vulnerabilities and concerns throughout the study.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATIONS OF SIGNS FOR CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC MEANING

In the subsequent analysis of the data, I will use intertextuality and interdiscoursivity as constructs as stated in the methodology chapter. Specifically, I will use Bloome's (2005) definitions about intertextuality and interdiscoursivity as analytic tools as described in chapter 2, the literature review. Bloome suggests that discourses and texts become intertextual and interdiscursive only when "proposed, acknowledged, and recognized, and they must have social significance" (Bloome et al, 2005 p. 144). The focus of this chapter is to find out how and to what extent the participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs?

It is viewed by some that culture is embedded in discourses, and that culture is circulated through texts and discourses (Urban, 2001). Urban suggests that the transmission of culture, myths, narratives, etc., is often done through the mass media and popular culture such as in movies, or the lyrics of popular songs, and that the process is not one of replication, but modification as each new manifestation of a cultural artifact occurs (2001). This supports the notion implied in this study that popular texts, and the discourses created by people in social contexts, are important. It also supports the notion that various cultural artifacts or texts are connected to various social discourses. I believe the subsequent excerpts taken from the data supports these concepts.

Olympics

For the first excerpt from the data, the participants watched a short segment of the 2004 Summer Olympics in Athens on television. Before the participants watched the segment, the 'teacher' instructed them that they would be focusing on signs and logos and that they would be writing down their interpretations of the meanings of the signs and logos. As background information, the 'teacher' told them not to expect to see corporate signs/logos in the Olympics, because of the 'purity' of the event, but to expect signs related to nationalism. Thus, the 'teacher' did not anticipate corporate discourse to be part of the conversation. In fact, before watching the segment, the teacher told the other participants that, although professional athletes often wore corporate signs/logos on them, this was not the case in Olympic sports because they were more 'pure.' The segment of the Olympics that the participants viewed focused on swimming events. The participants viewed the 'Games' for approximately thirty minutes. The following is the analysis of an excerpt of the discussion that took place right after the group viewed the Olympics.

Figure 1: Olympic Flag (Maps of World.com; 2005)

Table 3: Excerpt 1

Unit #	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Behroz	When the clock stopped	Connecting visual text with conversation		
02	Behroz	There was advertisement for a car company or something	Connects corporate and Olympic texts. Contradicts earlier assertion by teacher	Proposes connection between corporate text (advertisement) and Olympics	
03	Behroz	Also flags of the different countries.	Confirming teacher's assertions of nationalistic texts & discourses	Acknowledges connection between flags (national texts) and Olympics made previously by teacher	Acknowledges connection between nationalism and international athletics made previously by teacher.
04	Teacher	Flags of the different countries.	Repetition for support of		

			speaker		
05	Teacher	So nationalism there.	Confirm-ing	Recognizes connection between national texts and Olympic Games	Recognizes connection between nationalism and international athletics.
06	Teacher	Any other logos or signs?	Question		
07	Parviz	Olympic sign.	Response		
08	Teacher	What does the Olympic sign mean?	Question	Proposes connection between Olympic text and other text(s).	
09	Parviz	Color rings.	Response		
10	Teacher	There are actually five	Confirm-ing and expanding		
11	Parviz	Yes, five.	Confirms and repeats to show agreement and listening		
12	Teacher	Now, I want to ask you a question.	Claiming floor		
13	Teacher	That Olympic sign has five rings.	Repetition of fact. Wants participant to expand		
14	Parviz	Right, yes.	Acknow-ledgement		
15	Teacher	Do you know what that signifies?	Asking for informa-tion to expand idea.		
16	Teacher	Are they all the same	Question to guide		

		color?	and expand conversation about rings.		
17	Saeed	No.	Response		
18	Teacher	What are the different colors in the sign?	Elaboration/ question		
19	Saeed	I don't know about the colors	Response to questions in lines 15 & 16.		
20	Saeed	But, I know the five rings mean the five continents of the world	Providing information about intertextual connections	Proposes connection between Olympic text and other text	Proposes connection between international sports and internationalism
21	Teacher	That's exactly right	Teacher ratifies Saeed's assertion.	Acknowledges connection between Olympic text and geographical knowledge.	Acknowledges connection between international sports and internationalism
22	Saeed	But, I don't know the meaning of the colors.	Informing the others he doesn't know the entire meaning of the text.	Proposes connection between Olympic text and other possible text(s).	
23	Teacher	Well, there is yellow, white, black, red.	Providing information to assist the connection initiated by Saeed.	Same as above.	Proposes international sports discourse juxtaposed with discourse about international racial harmony
24	Teacher	Do you know what	Question	Same as above.	Same as above

		that signifies?			
25	Parviz	All of the world have another skin	Response	Acknowledges connection of Olympic text with texts related to race	Acknowledges connection of sports discourse with discourse about international racial harmony
26	Teacher	Yeah, different races, yeah.	Confirm-ing and supporting Parviz's response.	Recognizes connection of Olympic text with texts related to race.	Recognizes connection of sports discourse with discourse about international racial harmony.
27	Teacher	So, it's suppose to signify the world coming together.	Stating social signific-ance, but raising doubts about its legitimacy	Suggesting that Olympic text connects with texts related to racial and world unity. Thus, social significance.	Explicitly states social significance.
28	Teacher	From all five continents.	Reiterat-ing what has been said (#20)		
29	Teacher	And different skin colors.	Same as above (#25)		
30	Teacher	There were a lot of corporations	Connects to Behroz's proposal (#2)	Acknowledges connection between Olympic and corporate texts.	Acknowledges connection between corporate institutions and athletic institutions
31	Teacher	I was completely wrong.	Acknow-ledges naivete about Olympic 'purity'	Same as above.	Same as above
32	Teacher	I thought that they had been banned.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above
33	Teacher	Because they wanted	Clarifying		Same as above

		to make the Olympics more pure.			
34	Teacher	I thought that they had banned	Clarifying	Same as above	Same as above
35	Teacher	I don't know why I thought that	Acknow-ledges error.	Same as above.	Same as above
36	Behroz	It makes sense.	Offers support and legitimacy for teacher's previous statement related to 'purity' of Olympics.		
37	Teacher	Yeah, you think they would	Tries to make sense of his previous contention		
38	Teacher	But, it's obvious I was wrong	Acknow-ledgement of misjudge ment about 'purity' of Olympics.		
39	Teacher	Because they got Nike, they got Speedo	Recognit-ion of connect-ion Behroz made in (#2)	Recognizes connection between corporate texts and Olympics.	Recognizes connection between corporate and athletic institutions.
40	Behroz	They bought the Olympic committee.	Contradict ing notion of 'purity'	Explicitly states social significance of connection	Explicitly states social significance of connection between corporate

				between corporate & Olympic texts.	& Olympic discourses.

In the beginning of the excerpt (02), Behroz connects a corporate sign with the Olympics, contradicting the assertion made by the teacher that corporate signs/logos are not a part of the Olympics as they are in professional sports. Thus, Behroz points out or contradicts the interpretation made by the teacher. However, Behroz also points out signs related to nationalism, which the 'teacher' had suggested the participants might see. Therefore, the teacher repeats and supports this connection made by Behroz (04), even though there was a delay in acknowledging the connection to corporate signs.

There was acknowledgement on the part of the participants that there was a connection between sports, internationalism, and racial harmony embedded in the texts and discourses related to the Olympic Games. This was discovered through deciphering the meaning of the signs, although the 'teacher' facilitated the process of 'discovery' (The depiction the teacher gives of Olympic logo is not accurate; the colors of the rings are blue, yellow, black, green, and red as shown in the photograph). The teacher requests a definition of the meaning of the sign (08), and Parviz gives an answer "color rings" (09), which is more of a description. The interaction between Parviz and the 'teacher' in lines 06-11, shows a process where the teacher wants to facilitate conceptual understanding; although it does not appear at that point that Parviz understands the concept, he seems to be responding just to the teacher's description (11). In lines 12-13 & 15-16, the teacher asks for information for the purpose of getting the participants to expand the dialogue. Saeed responds by informing the group that the five rings signify the five continents of the world (20), although he states that he doesn't

"know about the colors" (19 & 22). Consequently, the teacher provides additional information to help contextualize the meaning of the sign by naming some of the colors of the rings, which seems to facilitate a response by Parviz who claims that the colors of the rings on the Olympic flag represents the various races, "All of the world have another skin" (25). The instructor then elaborates on the answers that Parviz and Saeed give by acknowledging the meaning that the group has constructed for the Olympic sign (flag) when he states: "So it's suppose to signify the world coming together from all five continents, and different skin colors" (27-29). This is the meaning or the interpretation the group appeared to construct. It should be pointed out that the interpretation is not entirely accurate in that the color of the rings represents the continents and not races per se (Bruner, 2003, p. 916). Nonetheless, the group constructed a meaning that has some importance and relevance in that the colors represent the continents and may have racial connections.

In line 30, the teacher begins to correct himself, as mentioned earlier. He states, "There were a lot of corporations". Thus, he acknowledges a connection between Olympic and corporate texts that connects to Behroz's proposal (2). In lines 31-35, the teacher acknowledges and clarifies his naivete about Olympic 'purity.' When the group watched the Games on television, corporate signs were ubiquitous on the athletes and throughout the Olympic venues. Therefore, the instructor acknowledges: "There were a lot of corporations. I was completely wrong" (30-31). Then he shares with the other participants the reasons why he thought corporate signs and logos were banned from the Games (33). The teacher then acknowledges specific corporate signs that were visible on the athletic gear of the athletes such as 'Nike' and 'Speedo' (39). In line 36, Behroz

appears to offer support for the teacher's statement related to the 'purity' of the Olympics when he suggests, "It makes sense" (36), which I interpret to mean that it would make sense if corporations were not allowed to advertise on the bodies of Olympic athletes. Behroz then ends the excerpt by stating: "They bought the Olympic committee" (40). Thus, Behroz offers a skeptical or even cynical interpretation of the omnipresence of corporate logos in the Olympics.

As the participants engaged in discussion about the 'texts,' it seems that the interpretation of the texts and the 'signs' developed in complexity and sophistication as the participants negotiate meaning. At the end, Behroz puts forth an alternative meaning of the texts in the excerpts, which is facilitated by the admission of the instructor that he was wrong about Olympic 'purity.'

It is important to note that there are instances when the participants make intertextual and interdiscursive connections by proposing, acknowledging, recognizing, and attaching social significance to the connections (Bloome, et al., 2005). Specifically, when the participants interact about the meaning of the Olympic sign, the five rings, they propose, recognize, acknowledge, and attach social significance to the meaning through interaction. This occurs again when the participants made connections between texts and discourses related to corporate entities and the Olympics. The teacher proposes connections exist by admitting that he was wrong when he stated in a previous conversation that there weren't any connections (30-35). Behroz recognizes and acknowledges the connection (2 & 36), and then the teacher further recognizes the connection when he states, "Because they got Nike, they got Speedo" (39), which meant that the athletes were wearing signs that signified those corporate entities. Finally,

Behroz explicitly states social significance of the connection when he says, "They bought the Olympic committee" (40). Thus it appears that, as the participants construct meaning through the interpretation of signs, intertextual and interdiscursive have been made.

In the excerpt, the participants are able to construct meaningful discourse through a joint examination of cultural texts and signs. An important pedagogical implication occurs when the teacher openly admits an error about an interpretation of texts (Olympic purity), which allows space for Behroz to contribute an alternative interpretation. In my role as 'teacher' this is somewhat humbling; however, as a researcher I look at this episode as something positive, because it enables Behroz to construct discourse creatively and independently, which is the type of practice that is essential for the development of language and literacy.

Military Signs in a Cross-Cultural Context

In the following analysis, once again the focus is on determining what meanings the participants construct of signs embedded in the texts used, and how these meanings develop through connections with various texts and discourses. Since two of the participants (Saeed and Merat) had been drafted into the Iranian Army before emigrating to the United States, I thought that using signs and texts from the military might be useful as a 'bridge' to meaningful discourses embedded in American English. Therefore, I included a text from the comic strip "Beetle Bailey" (Walker, 2004). The following is an excerpt from a conversation about the text that occurred after the

participants read the comic strip. The excerpt shows the participants constructing discourse(s) through a joint examination of a popular text.

Table 4: Excerpt 2

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Behroz	It seems that they are Army men.	Connecting to a text (Comic strip)	Proposing a connection between 'Beetle Bailey' text with other texts related to military	
02	Teacher	Okay, Army men	Gives support	Acknowledges connection between comic strip and military texts	
03	Teacher	Why?	Question to encourage discussion		
04	Behroz	Why they are Army?	Seeks clarification of teacher's question		
05	Teacher	Why?	Question to confirm need for clarification		
06	Teacher	In uniform?	Clarifies through question		
07	Behroz	Yes.	Acknowledge-ment of clarification		
08	Teacher	And they got those little signs	Guides conversation to focus on specific text	Recognizes connection between text and other military texts.	
09	Teacher	The guy has a little star on his	Same as above	Proposes connection between comic	

		shoulder.		strip and specific text in military	
10	Teacher	What does the star mean?	Question to focus on meaning of sign	Same as above	
11	Teacher	Do you know what a star means?	Same as above	Same as above	
12	Teacher	If you see someone in a military uniform in the United States	Giving contextual information to facilitate conversation	Same as above	
13	Teacher	And he has a star on him	Same as above	Same as above	
14	Teacher	Do you know that means?	Question to continue conversation	Same as above	
15	Behroz	A lieutenant?	A response in a form of a question	Acknowledges a connection	
16	Teacher	Not a lieutenant	Authoritative response		
17	Teacher	A star	Restating for purpose of guiding learners to 'answer'		
18	Merat	A major	Response to question (14)	Same as above	
19	Teacher	Up higher	Guiding learners to 'answer'		
20	Behroz	A general	Response to guidance	Acknowledges connection	
21	Teacher	A general	Confirms 'correct' response	Recognizes connection	
22	Teacher	If he has a star it means he is a general	Elaboration on 'correct' response	Suggests social significance.	

23	Teacher	You were in the Army	Attempt to get Merat engaged in conversation		
24	Teacher	In the Iranian military	Same as above		
25	Teacher	What does a general wear?	Invitation to share cultural knowledge	Proposing connection between "Beetle Bailey" text and Iranian military texts.	Proposes connection between Iranian and American military discourses
26	Teacher	Does he have stars?	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
27	Merat	No.	Gives response/ Shares cultural information		
28	Merat	Like three stripes.	Describes cultural sign for cultural outsider	Acknowledges connection in that he acknowledges that military personnel in Iran wear signs that signify rank as depicted in "Beetle Bailey;" however, the signs are different	Acknowledges connection between American and Iranian military discourses related to hierarchy (rank).
29	Teacher	No, okay.	Encourages sharing of information		
30	Merat	It's like three stripes.	Describes sign/text for cultural outsider	Same as above	Same as above.
31	Merat/ Behroz	Consults with Behroz in Farsi	Linguistic consultation to acquire necessary English for conversation		
32	Behroz	A flag.	Linguistic explanation		Same as above

33	Merat	A flag.	Repeats English words	Same as above	
34	Merat	A lot of things.	Elaboration/ Explanation of cultural sign		Same as above
35	Merat	It's a lot of things.	Same as above		
36	Teacher	It's a lot of things.	Confirms and encourages more sharing		
37	Behroz	It's not a star	Informs and elaborates about sign/text	Same as above	Same as above
38	Behroz	It's like three lines.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
39	Teacher	Okay, what about a colonel?	Question to encourage more textual sharing		
40	Teacher	What would a colonel wear?	Same as above	Proposing a connection between "Beetle Bailey" text, and Iranian military text.	
41	Merat	Three big stars.	Response to question	Acknowledges connection, although differences.	Recognizing connections between discourses
42	Teacher	Three big stars.	Clarifies response		
43	Teacher	Okay, so this is very different.	Evaluates and contrasts signs cross-culturally	Recognizes connection between texts, although explicitly states the differences.	Proposes differences between American and Iranian military discourses.
44	Teacher	In the American army a colonel would wear an eagle.	Informs about military signs	Explicitly states the social significance of sign signified in the "Beetle Bailey" text.	
45	Teacher	And then a	Same as		

		major would wear a gold oak leaf.	above		
46	Teacher	An oak leaf would mean a major.	Same as above		
47	Teacher	A captain would wear two silver bars.	Same as above		
48	Teacher	A lieutenant would wear a silver bar	Same as above		
49	Teacher	First lieutenant one silver bar	Same as above		
50	Teacher	A second lieutenant one gold bar	Same as above		
51	Teacher	Okay, so those are the symbols	Clarifying information		
52	Teacher	And the enlisted…	Making transition to invite others to share		
53	Teacher	What rank were you?	Question to Merat to facilitate cultural sharing	Proposes connection between "Beetle Bailey" text and Merat's military experience	Proposes connection between American and Iranian military discourses related to hierarchy.
54	Merat	In the army?	Request for clarification		
55	Teacher	Yes, in the army.	Confirmation of request to share		
56	Merat/ Behroz	Speaks in Farsi to Behroz	Negotiating linguistic meaning to be able to share with a cultural outsider		
57	Behroz	Rank (Speaks to	Same as above		

		Merat in Farsi)			
58	Merat	Oh, in Iran?	Requests confirmation of meaning of question (53)		
59	Teacher	Yeah.	Confirms meaning of question (53)		
60	Merat	Nothing.	Response to question	Proposes another connection between texts in Iran. (Will be explained in commentary).	Proposes Iranian military discourse juxtaposed with other religious/political discourses within Iran.
61	Merat	Just a soldier (laughter)	Elaborates		Same as above
62	Teacher	Not a private? Ranks?	Seeks confirmation of meaning of response	Doesn't recognize proposed connection. (Will be explained in commentary).	Doesn't recognize proposed connection. (Will be explained in commentary).
63	Merat	They don't give it to us.	Expansion of response	Explicitly states social significance of juxtaposed texts, although social significance not understood by 'teacher.' (Will be explained in commentary).	Explicitly states social significance of military, political, and religious discourses in Iran. Social significance not understood by 'teacher.' (Will be explained in commentary).

The conversation in the excerpt focuses on the meaning of the signs that relate to military rank, which was a text embedded in the comic strip. Later, the participants connect the text ("Beetle Bailey") to the American military, which the comic strip depicts, and then to texts and discourses related to the Iranian military, with the teacher facilitating the transition (24). Finally, Merat shares information about his lack of rank

in the Iranian military, which has social significance that was not fully understood by the teacher at the time of the interaction.

Behroz is able to ascertain very quickly that the comic strip depicts military, which contextualizes the conversation. Although it was obvious to the participants that the comic strip was depicting a military setting, they are not familiar with the signs that represent rank, because they have different signs that signify different ranks in the Iranian military, which the teacher learns from the conversation. For instance, when the instructor asks what the 'little star' represents in the text, which is the same in the 'real' ranking system in the U.S. military, Behroz doesn't know, although he does display some knowledge of the ranking system by asking "a lieutenant?" Then the participants and the instructor begin negotiating meaning of the sign, until Behroz states, "a general," which the teacher confirms. Even though the participants were unfamiliar, for the most part, with the specific signs that represent social rank and status within the American military, they were able to make connections to the concept of 'rank' within a military context. Thus, when the teacher asks the meaning of the eagle sign in this context, and the question goes unanswered, the teacher decides to switch discourses, creating a bridge to another similar discourse in which the participants have more familiarity. In other words, once cultural knowledge of the meaning of signs in a particular discourse (American military) is shared, the teacher provides an opportunity for Merat, who had spent time in the Iranian military, to share the meaning of signs from that framework, which he does. Thus, the data seems to indicate that textual and discursive connections are made between texts in the comic strip and texts related to the American military when facilitated by the teacher, and that connections then are made

to texts and discourses related to the Iranian military. It should be pointed out that in the beginning of the conversation, when the discussion is about the American military, the conversational structure is teacher-centered, with the teacher as the 'knowledgeable authority.' However, when the teacher facilitates a transition to a discussion about Iranian texts and discourses, the roles change so that the participants become 'knowledgeable authorities.' This finding will be discussed at length in chapter 6.

Behroz also facilitates the negotiations of meaning because he sometimes takes on the role of interpreter between the teacher and the other participants because of his more advanced English language proficiency. Thus, Behroz facilitates language and cultural learning for the others in the group (31-38 & 56-58), which enables Merat to become a cultural informant about signs and texts in the Iranian military.

When the teacher proposes that there are connections between the "Beetle Bailey" text and Iranian military texts (24-26), Merat informs the teacher that in the Iranian military a general doesn't have stars, but instead has stripes. Behroz elaborates about what the signs look like, which from the data one can conclude that an Iranian general wears a flag on his uniform that has three 'stripes' or 'lines,' or as Merat states, the sign has 'a lot of things' including the three stripes or lines, which is a significantly different sign from the sign used for the same rank in the U.S. military. The same is true when Merat informs the teacher what a colonel would wear three big stars in the Iranian military. The teacher reciprocates and gives the participants detailed information about signs used to represent various ranks in the U.S. military (44-51). The teacher then asks Merat about his rank in the Iranian army, and, after negotiating the meaning with Behroz in Farsi, he shares that he was at the very bottom of the ranking system in the

Iranian military, and that he wasn't considered to have any rank at all. This has social significance; however, it was not clear to the instructor at the time of the conversation.

At the time of the discussion, the teacher wasn't sure exactly what Merat meant by 'Nothing,' (60), or "They don't give it to us" (63), although I had some assumptions. Therefore, after the class was over and the data collected, I had the participants review the excerpt, and I used them as cultural informants to find out what the meaning of the response was. They told me that because Merat was an Iranian Baha'i, he was forbidden to attain any rank at all in the Iranian army. Merat and Saeed, who were both drafted into the army, both experienced this policy. In addition, Saeed informed me that while in the Iranian army he served as a cook. One day a mullah (Islamic cleric) visited the unit and forbade Saeed to work as a cook because he was a Baha'i. However, when the cleric left, the commander put Saeed back into his cooking position for practical reasons (he didn't have enough cooks). I asked another cultural informant, who was not a participant, why the cleric acted as he did, and she stated that Saeed would have been considered "unclean" by the mullah.

Thus, in the excerpt, when Merat replies "Nothing" (60), he is making connections between military texts and discourses in Iran that are juxtaposed with religious and political discourses in Iran. In addition, when he states, "They don't give it to us" (63), he is explicitly stating something that is socially significant; specifically, because of his religious identity (Baha'i), he was denied access to rank and privilege in the Iranian military. However, this was not understood by the teacher at the time of the interaction.

Therefore, based on Bloome's definition (2005, et al., p. 237), intertextuality or interdiscoursivity are not fully constructed in this case at the time of the actual interaction, because there isn't clear recognition on the part of the teacher. However, intertextual and interdiscursive connections are constructed, when I, as researcher, communicate with the participants later on, as described.

Through engaging the text, "Beetle Bailey", the participants are able to construct meanings of signs, as described, through making intertextual and interdiscursive connections. Recognition and understanding of meanings of signs are enhanced by relating the interaction to a discourse from their own sociocultural world (Iranian military). Specifically, Merat has more knowledge about meaningful signs embedded in the discourse related to the Iranian military, because he spent a significant amount of time in that cultural world. And Behroz, who was never in the military, has more developed English language proficiencies than Merat. Thus, they are able to communicate in a collaborative way with a cultural outsider (the teacher) in order to share cultural knowledge and cultural expertise related to Iranian signs. Through this process, at least three of the participants (teacher, Merat, & Behroz) become learners and collaborators in cross-cultural constructions of meanings of texts/signs. Merat and Behroz become aware of specific English texts and signs, and, through cultural sharing and a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs, they are able to construct a discourse about the Iranian military that is meaningful and critical.

Pop Music vs. Facial Hair

The next excerpt selected from the data began with a conversation about the extent of the availability of Western or American popular music genres in Iranian society. What evolved from the conversation was a shared acknowledgement that Western popular texts and discourses appear to conflict with political texts and discourses associated with authorities in Iran, at least from the perspectives of the participants. As the conversation began, the teacher inquired about the level of popularity of Hip Hop in Iran. It was implied and understood that the conversation was about young Iranians. Behroz acknowledged that young Iranians "listen to everything" (03). Yet, then it became clear that this 'listening' occurred primarily in private homes and private places, and that it is not tolerated by those with power in public spaces. Thus, in the subsequent transcript, which is displayed in the following table, the participants share with the 'teacher' conflicts that occur between discourses and texts generated in the more 'secular' Western world juxtaposed with those generated in an Islamic theocracy.

The following excerpt is examined to ascertain to what extent the participants were able to construct discourse(s) that was meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs within an Iranian context. In addition, I observed in what ways conversational structures of the group during negotiations of textual meanings impacted learning. Again, I used Bloome's (Bloome, et al., 2005) concepts to determine intertexuality and interdiscoursivity.

Table 5: Excerpt 3

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	Don't Iranians like Hip-Hop?	Attempt to start conversation about pop culture in Iran	Proposes connection of 'Western' popular musical texts with popular texts in Iran	
02	Behroz	Yep.	Response to question	Acknowledges connection of texts	
03	Behroz	They listen to everything.	Elaboration	Same as above	
04	Teacher	Yeah?	Request for more information		
05	Behroz	XXXXXX Hip-hop	Expanded response that is unclear on tape.		
06	Teacher	Not on the street?	Question to clarify	Proposes social significance of the interaction of Western popular texts juxtaposed with texts in Iran	
07	Teacher	Right?	Same as above	Same as above	
08	Teacher	Only in the homes?	Same as above	Same as above	
09	Behroz	Yeah, in homes.	Response to clarify meaning	Acknowledges social significance or conflict between Western popular texts and texts in Iran	
10	Behroz	It's illegal	Elaborates and expands meaning of response	Recognizes social significance of Western popular texts juxtaposed with political texts in Iran.	Proposes that legal/ political discourses conflict with Western popular discourses
11	Behroz	I mean, you can not…	Attempt to expand on response about	Same as above	

			venues for Hip Hop in Iran		
12	Teacher	So, Hip-Hop out in the street?	Statement in the form of a question to clarify		
13	Teacher	What would happen?	Question to get Behroz to expand more on topic		
14	Behroz	If you're listening in the car	Expands information about listening to Hip Hop in Iran	Same as above	Same as above
15	Behroz	If they stop you and find out that you're listening to this stuff…	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above.
16	Teacher	In the car?	Question to encourage expansion of topic		
17	Behroz	Yeah.	Response to request for expansion		
18	Teacher	Who will pull you aside?	Question		Acknowledges connection or conflict between political and legal discourses in Iran with Western popular discourse
19	Behroz	I mean the police.	Response to question	Same as above	States social significance of political and legal discourses conflicting with Western popular discourse
20	Teacher	Police?	Asks for confirmation		
21	Behroz	Guards.	Qualifies response with	Same as above	Same as above

			more specificity		
22	Teacher	Revolutionary Guards?	Question to clarify previous response		Same as above
23	Merat	Anyone who has a moustache. (Laughter)	Entrance into conversation with more information	Proposes 'secular' texts juxtaposed with religious text/sign.	Proposes connection/ conflict between Western/secular discourse and legal/political/ religious discourses in Iran
24	Merat	Can stop you.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
25	Merat	Doesn't matter who it is.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
26	Behroz	They have a commandment in Islam called like ah…	Information for cultural outsider	Acknowledges conflict between religious text and secular texts	Acknowledges connection/ conflict between secular discourse and legal/political/ religious discourses in Iran
27	Behroz	I mean, called right thing and stop them from doing bad thing.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
28	Behroz	I mean, I'm minding my own business	Example to depict concept		
29	Behroz	Okay, you're doing wrong stop it.	Same as above		Same as above
30	Behroz	Yeah, if you're listening to something don't do that.	Same as above	Recognizes conflict between religious text and secular texts.	
31	Behroz	If it's a hard kind of guy	More specificity for cultural outsider		

32	Behroz	He might get physical	Same as above	States social significance of conflict between religious and secular texts.	States social significance of connections between religious and legal/political discourses.
33	Teacher	But, Merat was saying that a moustache and beard is a sign	Asking for clarification of Merat's previous assertion (23)		
34	Teacher	Someone with a moustache and beard that's not good?	Same as above	Proposes connection between text (facial hair) and religious/political texts.	
35	Merat	No, it's power	Respond to request for clarification	Acknowledges connection between text (facial hair) and religious/political texts.	Proposes that political/legal discourses are juxtaposed with religious discourse
36	Teacher	Power?	Asks for elaboration		
37	Merat	If I do something and he do something…	Explaining	Recognizes connection between text and religious/political texts.	Same as above
38	Teacher	Yeah.	Encourage-ment to continue		
39	Merat	Same thing you know	Continues to expand explanation by giving example	Same as above	Same as above
40	Merat	You go to judge	Same as above	States social significance of connection between religious and political/legal texts.	Same as above.

41	Merat	If he shaved his moustache	Same as above	Same as above	
42	Merat	He going to go to jail for a year	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
43	Merat	The other go to jail for a month sometime.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
44	Teacher	Just with the beard?	Requests clarification of meaning	Clarifying connection between religious and political texts and their social significance.	Acknowledges connection between political/legal discourses with religious discourse.
45	Merat	Yes.	Confirms meaning	Confirming social significance.	
46	Merat	Sometimes not always.	Qualifies response	Modifying social significance claim	
47	Teacher	So, a beard is a good thing?	Question to request more 'cultural' information		Recognizes connection between political/legal discourses with religious discourse.
48	Behroz	It's a religious sign.	Responds to request for more information	Explaining Iranian religious text to a cultural outsider.	
49	Behroz	Because in Islam it says never shave your beard and moustache.	Specifies more textual (religious) information	Same as above	States explicitly the social significance of the juxtaposition of political/legal & religious discourse in Iran.
50	Behroz	It's like a religious kind of thing.	Same as above	Same as above	
51	Behroz	Because if you read in the news about the Taliban	Connects to another text to contextualize information	Proposing connection between religious texts from Afghanistan with	Proposes connection between religious discourse and international

				texts in Iran	political discourse
52	Behroz	they would take them out of the bus and wiped them if they shaved.	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above
53	Teacher	Oh, I see.	Acknowledges contextualized information	Acknowledge-ment of connection between texts	Acknowledges connection between religious and political discourses
54	Merat	If he shaves it's like I don't believe you guys.	Gives an example as an explanation for cultural outsider		States social significance of connection between religious and political discourses
55	Behroz	I mean, if people want to get a job	Explains through example	Proposes connection between religious text and economic/labor texts in Iran.	Proposes connection between religious discourse and business/ labor discourse
56	Behroz	they have an interview	Same as above	Same as above	
57	Behroz	They grow their beard and moustache and go.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
58	Merat	You know what's the new law? (Laughter)	Gives an example to explain significance	Proposing a connection between legal and religious texts in Iran.	Proposes religious discourse juxtaposed with legal discourse
59	Merat	The taxi driver must have a moustache and a …	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
60	Teacher	Beard?	Linguistic assistance in the form of a question		
61	Merat	Yeah.	Acknowledges assistance		

62	Teacher	Now, when you saw my moustache	Asks question to clarify significance of sign	Proposes a possible connection between text (moustache) and cultural texts in Iran.	
63	Teacher	Is that a big deal?	Same as above	Same as above.	
64	Behroz	It's like a traditional kind of guy.	Clarifies meaning of sign (moustache)	Acknowledges connection between text (moustache) and cultural text in Iran	
65	Behroz	I mean it's not religious	Clarifies and explains meaning of sign/text	Recognizes and clarifies connection between texts.	
66	Behroz	moustache alone.	Same as above	Same as above.	
67	Behroz	It's like a manly kind of thing.	Same as above	States social significance of the intertextual connection.	
68	Teacher	Okay.	Acknowledges explanation		
69	Behroz	Every man has a moustache.	Elaborates on the significance of the sign (moustache)	Same as above.	
70	Behroz	But the beard thing	Clarifies differences in meaning of two different signs within sociocultural context	Proposes connection between text (beard) and religious text(s) in Iran.	
71	Behroz	It's a religious kind of thing.	Specifies meaning of sign (Beard)	Same as above.	
72	Merat	The face doesn't must be shiny.	Acknowledges and expands meaning of sign within	Acknowledges connection of text (beard) and texts in Iran.	

			sociocultural context		
73	Merat	You know, it must be something on it.	Same as above	States social significance of the connection (beard) with religious/political texts in Iran.	

In the beginning of the preceding excerpt, the participants interact about whether or not young Iranians have embraced Western popular music texts. It is agreed that many have, and then the discussion moves towards the social consequences of the juxtaposition of 'Western' popular texts with texts connected to those in positions of power in Iranian society. In other words, texts connected to instruments of power in Iran—courts, police, mullahs, Revolutionary Guards, etc. (10-32). Behroz acknowledges the social significance of the conflict between Western popular texts and texts related to religion and the courts in Iran when he points out that Western popular music, such as Hip-Hop, is played in private places, such as homes (09), and not in public, which he states is illegal (10). He states specifically that police and guards (Revolutionary Guards) would enforce laws that banish Western popular texts (19 & 21). When asked by the teacher asks who enforces the suppression of Western popular music, Merat replies, "Anyone who has a moustache" (23), which begins another point of discussion, a conversation about a sign related to perceived religiosity in Iran.

Specifically, the discourse turns to the connection of facial hair as a meaningful sign in Iranian society that relates to perceived levels of religiosity and power. The connection between the amount of facial hair on men is discussed in relation to related discourse and texts. In the interaction, the participants negotiate meaning related to the

intertextual and interdiscursive connections between political and legal discourses in Iran and Western popular texts and discourses. The meaning that is constructed is that there is usually conflict with significant social consequences (10-22). Behroz explains specifically that an Islamic text (he does not specify whether it is in the Qur'an or a Hadith), from his interpretation, allows adherents to "stop them from doing bad thing" (26-30). My interpretation of his interpretation is that somewhere in Islamic discourse, or in a specific text, it is the duty of a Muslim to stop someone who is engaging in behavior that is not in accordance with Islamic laws, ordinances, mores, or norms. Apparently, there are people in Iran, Revolutionary Guards and others, who do just that. Thus, the participants are discussing connections, or conflicts, between Western popular texts (music), and texts and discourses related to legal, political, and religious institutions in Iran.

Merat states that anyone with a 'moustache' represents power and authority, and, from his perspective, potential oppression (23). In the discussion about facial hair, it becomes clear to the teacher and Behroz that Merat uses the word 'moustache' to signify all facial hair. It became a learning moment for Merat when the teacher and Behroz make a distinction between 'moustache' and 'beard' (33-34; 44; 47; 49; 57; 66; 69-70), which Merat seems to understand near the end of the sequence (59-61). Therefore, what Merat appears to be proposing (23-25) to the teacher is that facial hair (moustache and beard) signifies a religious sign or text in Iran, which in turn connects to political and legal texts. That is, any adult male without facial hair signifies someone more 'secular,' which is in conflict with religious texts and discourses, as well as political and legal texts and discourses because Iran is a theocracy. Merat specifically

suggests that facial hair, or lack of facial hair, may determine an outcome in a court of law (37-46), where an adult male who is clean-shaven is much more likely to receive a longer sentence than someone with facial hair.

Behroz brings up the social consequences and implications of someone going to a job interview clean-shaven when he states, "They grow their beard and moustache and go" (57). Implying that in order to get a job one must grow facial hair. Thus, according to the participants, a clean-shaven man is looked upon as un-Islamic, or at least less Islamic, which can translate into harsh economic consequences. It should be pointed out that, at another time, Behroz stated that the consequences are not as harsh in recent years as they were, say, a decade ago. In any case, Behroz proposes connections between a religious sign (facial hair) with religious and economic texts and discourses in Iran. He also suggests the social significance of a religious sign, including its relationship to access to economic resources.

In the sequence, the participants and the teacher are able to negotiate an understanding of the degree to which particular texts from the Western world in general, and the United States in particular (popular music), conflict with texts and discourses in Iran according to age, position, and power—that cultural signs, such as facial hair, have significant meanings, such as level of religiosity, which can determine the level of access to power and privilege. And thus, this interaction indicates joint construction of critical discourse by the participants.

While it should not be any big surprise that there is textual and discursive conflict between texts and discourses from the 'secular' West and an Islamic theocracy, it is informative and meaningful when the participants share specific examples of how

this conflict is manifested in their former sociocultural lives. For instance, when Merat suggests that discrimination exists in the legal system, in that those who are perceived to be more secular or non-Islamic often receive harsher penalties for the same crime, there is meaningful discussion. Not only is it a clear example of power of signs and symbols within a culture, but also an example of how power affects lives in a culture.

In the data, there often is not a clear delineation between legal, political, and religious texts and discourses of those in power in Iran (35-53), or even between religious and business/economic discourses. This is what one could expect in a theocracy. Yet, in the beginning of the excerpt, as previously mentioned, Behroz indicates that many young Iranians have embraced Western or American cultural texts such as Hip Hop (01-03). One might conclude that there may be generational tensions in contemporary Iranian society, or perhaps that tensions may cross geographical or class lines, which will be discussed elsewhere. Behroz also makes connections between religious texts in Iran with religious texts at the international level when he points out how being clean-shaven, as a sign, was interpreted and acted upon by the Taliban when they were in power (51-52).

In the content it is clear that the participants are able to construct intertextual and interdiscursive connections between institutions related to religion, economics, the legal system, and the political arena and Western popular texts. Therefore, in the process of interaction and negotiation, meaningful content and interpretations are constructed of signs embedded in various texts and discourses. Thus, the participants do construct discourse that is meaningful and critical through a joint examination of texts and signs. In addition, Merat's quest to join the conversation, because he was eager to share his

previous sociocultural world with a cultural outsider, provided learning moments for him, such as understanding specific words used for describing facial hair and how to negotiate meaning in English.

Yabahasani or Government Attire

The interpretation of signs and the connection to meaningful discourses continued in the transcript that follows. As was the case with the previous transcript, the following transcript focuses on signs in the Iranian culture, and their connections to political and religious discourses. In this event, the participants jointly construct the meaning of signs and then make connections to religious, political, and gender texts and discourses.

The following excerpt is taken from a lengthy conversation that began with a discussion about the extent of 'Western' popular culture genres, such as Hip Hop in Iran (see Excerpt 3). Later on in the discussion, the participants discussed the extent of the existence of 'Western' style clothing in Iran and authority attitudes about it. Thus, the conversation turned to 'appropriate' attire, and what clothing signifies within Iranian society. The topic of conversation provided opportunities for the participants to engage in meaningful discussion through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs.

Table 6: Excerpt 4

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	What are some clothes that symbolizes	Question connecting to a cultural sign/text	Proposes connection between clothes and government	Proposes connection between political discourse and

		something good for the government?		texts	discourses related to cultural mores in Iran
02	Teacher	Or religious authorities?	Same as above	Expands proposed connection to explicitly include religious texts.	Expands proposed connection to include religious discourse.
03	Teacher	What was good dress for a man?	Question connecting to a discourse	Further expands proposed connection to include cultural/gender texts	Further expands proposed connection to include gender discourse.
04	Behroz	Good dress is like the cotton trouser	Response to inform cultural outsider	Acknowledges connection between clothes and religious/political texts and gender text	Acknowledges connection between gender discourse and political/religious discourses related cultural mores
05	Behroz	And a simple shirt covering the whole body	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
06	Merat	Like this (Puts hands around neck)	Elaborating describing 'sign' for cultural outsider	Recognizes connection between clothes and religious and political texts	Recognizes connection between gender discourse and political/religious discourses related to cultural mores
07	Behroz	Yeah, the tie is prohibited	Confirming social significance of sign	States social significance of juxtaposed texts	States social significance of connected discourses
08	Teacher	No tie?	Question to clarify and invitation to expand	Asks about social significance of juxtaposed texts	
09	Behroz	No tie.	Confirming accuracy of response (07)	Confirms social consequences of juxtaposed texts	Same as above
10	Merat	That's how we know whose like	Elaboration of meaning of sign/text	Recognizes and confirms connection	Recognition of connection between political

		government people		between clothes and political texts	discourse and discourse about cultural mores.
11	Merat	And who is the regular people	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
12	Merat	Because they cannot shave	Redirecting conversation to the meaning of a new sign/text	Proposes connection between texts related to clothes and text related to facial hair as discussed in the previous excerpt (03)	Proposes connection between religious discourse and political and cultural discourses as discussed in the previous excerpt (03)
13	Merat	And they can not…	Trying to elaborate		
14	Behroz	They have a beard	Assists Merat in clarifying meaning of sign/text	Acknowledges connection between texts related to clothes and facial hair.	Acknowledges connection between religious discourse and political/cultural discourse.
15	Behroz	And that kind of shirt	Repeats significance of sign stated in (05)	Reaffirms intertextual connections.	Reaffirms interdiscursive connections
16	Teacher	I know exactly what you're talking about	Confirms knowledge of meaning of sign stated in (05)	Recognizes connection between clothes and political/cultural texts	Recognition of connection between political and cultural discourses
17	Teacher	I've seen the Foreign Minister	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
18	Teacher	The representative to the United Nations from Iran.	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above.
19	Behroz	Yeah.	Confirms that interpretation is 'correct'	Confirms/ recognizes connection between texts	Confirms/ recognizes connection between

					discourses
20	Teacher	He looks exactly like that.	Sharing understanding of sign	Same as above	Same as above
21	Behroz	They call him Yabahasani	Elaborates on meaning of sign and shares linguistic information	States social significance of juxtaposed texts	States social significance of connection between religious/political discourses and cultural mores
22	Teacher	Yabahasani?	Question to confirm pronunciation		
23	Behroz	Yabahasani	Response to confirm pronunciation	Same as above	Same as above
24	Behroz	It's like you can see him from here and just…	Sharing sociocultural meaning of text/sign		
25	Teacher	That's the government.	Displaying understanding of text/sign	Same as above	Confirms recognition of juxtaposed discourses
26	Behroz	That's the government.	Confirming 'correctness' of interpretation through repetition	Reaffirms social significance of juxtaposed texts	Reaffirms social significance of connected religious and political discourses
27	Teacher	Yabaha…	Requesting linguistic/ cultural information		
28	Teacher	Say it again	Same as above		
29	Behroz	Yabahasani	Response to request for linguistic information		

In the beginning of the excerpt, the 'teacher' proposes a connection between attire and what is considered appropriate by government authorities in Iran. Behroz had

shared in an earlier conversation that he had once been harassed by some authorities in a public space because the clothes he was wearing were perceived to be too 'Western.' It is my understanding from discussions with the participants and other cultural informants that factors such as time and place have determined the degree of tolerance or intolerance towards 'deviant' dress by religious/political authorities. Specifically, in the decade after the Revolution the authorities were more stringent than they are perhaps today, and there are provincial cities and rural villages that are more socially conservative so that dress codes are more stringently enforced by local authorities than other parts of the country. Thus, as there are myriad interpretations of what attire is tolerated, which is true for almost anything, the following commentary is an interpretation of the interpretation the participants gave of signs and texts related to 'appropriate attire' in Iran.

The teacher proposes a connection between religious, political, and gender discourses and signs related to attire in Iran (01-03). Behroz acknowledges the connection between clothes and religious and political texts when he responds by stating, "Good dress is like the cotton trouser" (04), "good" meaning what is considered 'good' by the religious/political authorities in power. He also infers connections between gender discourse and political and religious discourses because he is specifically discussing what appropriate attire for a male is. There are also interdiscursive connections to traditional cultural mores, which in turn are connected to religious discourse(s). Behroz then connects that sign with another by adding, "And a simple shirt covering the whole body" (05). Thus, Behroz begins a linguistic representation of visual signs in the Iranian culture that he connects to religious and

political texts and discourses. In other words, this acknowledgement contributes to the process of constructing a connection between discourses and texts as specified in the table (04-07)—the acknowledgement of connections between texts and discourses related to religion, politics, gender, and cultural mores. Merat recognizes this connection by explaining visually by putting his hands around his neck so that the cultural outsider (teacher) could get a better understanding of what the 'sign' looked like (06). Furthermore, Behroz explicitly recognizes the social significance and consequences of the juxtaposed texts when he states, "Yeah, the tie is prohibited" (07). Here he is explicitly stating the social significance and consequences of looking 'Western' by exhibiting 'Western' oriented signs related to attire, such as a tie in Iranian society. Thus, the participants construct meaningful conversation that proposes, acknowledges, and recognizes the juxtaposition of texts and discourses, and then the participants interpret the social significance and consequences of the sign (07-09), which is necessary for there to be intertexuality and interdiscoursivity (Bloome, et al., 2005, p. 144).

Merat recognizes the connection between clothes as a sign or text and political texts when he states, "That's how we know who's like government people, and who is the regular people" (10-11). Therefore, he clearly connects the sign that Behroz describes as "a simple shirt covering the whole body" (05) with political power. These texts are connected to political discourse and discourse about cultural mores in Iran, which cannot be clearly delineated with religious discourse because it is a theocracy. The participants were clearly connecting to, and making interpretations of, institutional discourses in Iran.

Merat then connects another sign, unshaven men, to political and religious texts and discourses, as previously discussed. This interpretation is further constructed by Behroz, when he states, "They have a beard" (14), and then he connects it with the previous sign, "And that kind of shirt" (15). The teacher then recognizes the sign that Behroz and Merat have been constructing by connecting to a previous text, a text that he had seen in the media of a political figure from Iran, "the representative to the United Nations from Iran" (18). The teacher negotiates the meaning of the sign by telling the others, "He looks exactly like that" (20). Behroz, then, further develops the meaning of the sign(s) by giving it (them) a name, yabahasani, which is constructed by the participants to mean the conservative attire of government officials in power, which is confirmed and agreed upon by the teacher and Behroz (25-26).

Yabahasani signifies to the participants an official or an authority who works for the government of Iran. What is important is that meaning was conveyed and negotiated between the participants and the cultural outsider (the 'teacher'), and during that process a joint construction of meaning developed.

Thus, it is clear that the participants constructed a discourse from a text (attire of government officials) through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs. It is also apparent that as the participants, Behroz and Merat, became the 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' they became centered in the conversation, which created authentic conversational practice in English.

Donkeys and Politics

The next event that allowed the meanings of signs to be constructed occurred after the participants watched a short excerpt of the Democratic National Convention on television. Before the presentation, the teacher instructed the participants to take notes about the signs that they see and to be prepared to share their notes, thoughts, and interpretations with the rest of the group. When the discussion ensued after watching the event on television, one sign in particular caught the attention of the participants—the use of the 'donkey' as a sign to represent the Democratic Party. It was a sign that signified something that was decidedly foreign to the participants because 'donkey,' as the following sequence will show, means something very different as a text in the community that they had come from previously. The following is a brief excerpt of the discussion that occurred after observing the Democratic National Convention on television. The data will show a joint construction of meaning of a political text/sign occurs when the participants make connections to discourses that they believe are connected to the political party that the sign represents or signifies.

Table 7: Excerpt 5

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Behroz	The Elephant is the Republican?	Question to understand sign/text	Proposes connection between sign and political party.	
02	Teacher	I always get this confused (laughter).	Tentative response		
03	Teacher	Um…yeah, I think so…	Same as above	Acknowledges connection	

				between sign and political party.	
04	Teacher	The Elephant is Republican	Firm response to question	Recognizes the connection between sign and political party.	
05	Teacher	The Donkey is the Democrat	Same as above	Proposes connection between new sign 'Donkey' and another political party.	
06	Teacher	So, that's like the symbol.	Expansion of response	Same as above	
07	Saeed	Yeah…	Acknowledging response	Acknowledging the connection between sign and political party.	
08	Teacher	Now, I know that's funny	Elaborating and making connection to other text	Proposes that sign 'donkey' is connected to a different text.	
09	Teacher	Because in Iran the donkey is the symbol of something stupid, right?	Making connection to text from participants' background	Same as above	
10	Class	(Laughter)	Acknowledging connection with laughter	Acknowledge-ment of connection of 'donkey' and new text.	
11	Behroz	Yeah.	Confirms connection with response	Same as above	
12	Behroz	Somebody was speaking about the donkey.	Elaborates on the response	Recognition of sign with two different meanings in a cross-cultural context.	
13	Behroz	I thought he	Same as above	States social	

		was making fun of him.		significance of the two different texts of same sign when juxtaposed.	
14	Teacher	There you go	Agreeing and showing understanding	Acknowledges social significance of the two different texts of same sign when juxtaposed.	
15	Teacher	It's a good example of a cultural perspective	Informing and providing context	Same as above	
16	Teacher	Because in your culture donkey represents stupidity	Same as above	Same as above	
17	Teacher	And this represents a party	Informing to make connections to sign	Same as above	
18	Teacher	They think it's a good thing	Negotiating/ constructing meaning of sign/text	Same as above	
19	Teacher	The donkey is a good thing	Same as above	Same as above	
20	Behroz	Why?	Asking question to begin construction of meaning of sign	Proposes connection of other texts to sign ('donkey').	
21	Behroz	Is it a hard worker?	Negotiation/ constructing meaning of sign/text	Proposes and negotiates meaning of another text(s) to sign (donkey).	Proposes connection between labor discourse and discourse of Democratic Party
22	Teacher	Yeah.	Same as above	Acknowledges another text connected to sign (donkey).	Acknowledges connection between labor discourse and

					discourse of Democratic Party
23	Teacher	It represents something hard working.	Same as above	States social significance of intertextual connection.	States social significance of interdiscursive connection.
24	Teacher	But…(More laughter)	Hesitates in construction of meaning of sign		
25	Behroz	That's good.	Confirms construction of meaning of sign	Recognizes social significance of intertextual connection.	Recognizes social significance of interdiscursive connection.
26	Teacher	Okay.	Accepts construction of meaning of sign	Same as above	Same as above

Figure 2: "Democratic Party Symbol" (U.S. Department of State; 2004)

In the event, there is negotiation of meaning between the teacher and Behroz, particularly when discussing meanings connected to the sign 'donkey.' In the beginning of the event, Behroz asks the 'teacher' about the meaning of the elephant symbol in the context of being connected to a political party in U.S. American politics. The teacher cannot remember at first whether the 'elephant' signifies the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. However, the teacher quickly expresses with certainty that, "The elephant is Republican," and "the donkey is the Democrat" (04-05). Therefore, Behroz proposes a connection between the sign 'elephant' and a political party (Republican)

(01), which the teacher acknowledges and recognizes (03-04). The teacher then delineates between the 'elephant' and the 'donkey' signs, by connecting the 'donkey' sign with another political party (Democratic) (04-05). Saeed then appears to acknowledge the connection or the interpretation of the meaning of the sign through an affirmative response (07). Subsequently, the teacher proposes that the sign 'donkey' is connected to a different text by sharing with the participants that he is aware of a common interpretation amongst Iranians about the meaning of the sign 'donkey' that "the donkey is the symbol of something stupid" (08-09). Thus, the teacher is proposing that the sign signifies two different texts or meanings that are juxtaposed in this cross-cultural context. That is, the teacher is allowing an opportunity, or space, to observe and to negotiate how one particular sign (donkey) can take on various meanings and interpretations within various cultural, political, or social contexts. The participants confirm the different meanings of signs across cultures and contexts and agree that there are social consequences to different interpretations (09-14). Along with the recognition of a sign having two different texts, there is recognition and acknowledgement of how those meanings affect the social significance of texts. For instance, Behroz states, "I thought he was making fun of him" (13).

In the rest of the excerpt, the participants negotiate the meaning of the sign/text (donkey) that signifies the Democratic Party (16-26). I can attest (in my role as teacher) that the negotiation is genuine, because I had never contemplated why the U.S. Democratic Party has used the donkey as the Party symbol. The participants, curious as to why a political party would identify itself with a symbol that, in Iran, would meet with much derision, advance the conversation. Behroz proposes a connection to other

texts by asking: "Is it a hard worker?" (21), and the teacher agrees (22). Thus, the two participants propose, acknowledge, and recognize a joint construction of what the sign 'donkey' means in this context, that it represents hard workers. This in turn connects to labor discourses related to the labor movement, which in turn connects to discourses related to the Democratic Party. I do not know if this is the meaning that the people who originally associated the 'donkey' symbol with the Democratic Party had in mind, but the meaning stated above is what participants constructed in this study. Thus, it is clear that the participants were able to construct meaning of a notable political sign through connecting meaning to a larger institutional discourse.

Iranian Flags

In the next excerpt of the data, the participants construct meanings of signs embedded in an important national and cultural symbol—the Iranian national flag. As the participants negotiate meanings and make intertextual and interdiscursive connections, a meaningful conversation of recent Iranian history developed.

The excerpt was taken from a conversation that was at first about the American flag. The facilitator showed the participants a photograph of an American flag and then asked the participants to share what the symbol meant to them. Power was often mentioned. Then I asked the participants the same question about the Iranian flag. A much longer conversation developed, and the following excerpt was taken from that conversation.

Table 8: Excerpt 6

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	The next question is when you look at the Iranian flag	Transition to another conversational topic		
02	Teacher	The one now	Connecting to a specific text.		
03	Teacher	What comes to your mind?	Question to invite interpretations and discussion of text		
04	Teacher	What does it symbolize?	Same as above		
05	Teacher	Do you want to go first?	Managing turn-taking		
06	Parviz	First of all, when I see Iranian flag	Response to invitation to share interpretation of sign/text		
07	Parviz	Because Iranian flag symbolize the name of God	Sharing interpretation of sign/text	Proposes connecting text (flag) to religious text (God)	Proposes national discourse juxtaposed with religious discourse
08	Parviz	Something like that, you know	Qualifying interpretation	Same as above	Same as above
09	Parviz	Arabic say Allah	Elaborating on meaning of text for cultural outsider	Proposes connecting text (flag) with religious text (Allah) & linguistic text (Arabic)	
10	Parviz	Name of God	Same as above	Proposes connecting text (flag) with religious text (Name of God)	
11	Parviz	So, when I see Iranian flag I think of	Explaining interpretation of meaning of	Same as above.	Same as above

		God	sign		
12	Teacher	Okay, Saeed?	Managing turn-taking		
13	Saeed	It's my country and everything.	Sharing interpretation of sign/text	Proposes connecting text (flag) with national text.	
14	Teacher	It symbolizes your country?	Request for clarification and expansion		
15	Saeed	Yeah.	Clarifies		
16	Teacher	Merat?	Managing turn-taking		
17	Merat	Ayatollah	Responds and gives interpretation of meaning of sign	Proposes connecting text (flag) with religious text (Religious/ political leaders in Iran).	Acknowledges connection between religious and national discourses proposed in (08)
18	Merat	Because on flag there's signs reminds of Ayatollah.	Elaboration on meaning of interpretation	Same as above.	Same as above
19	Saeed	Mullahs.	Qualifies and explains previous response	Acknowledges connection between text (flag) with religious text (Religious leaders in Iran).	Recognizes connection between religious and national discourses.
20	Teacher	And that's…	Attempts to elaborate		
21	Merat	It reminds me of Ayatollah	Confirms & repeats previous response (18)	Same as above	Same as above
22	Saeed	They changed the sign on flag	Informs cultural outsider about text	Proposes connection between current national flag (text) with previous national flag (text).	States social significance of the juxtaposition of national and religious discourses
23	Teacher	They changed it to	Question to clarify and		

		Ayatollah?	allow expansion		
24	Saeed	Actually, there was lion with a sun in the flag	Informs cultural outsider about text/sign	Same as above	Proposes a connection between discourse related to previous monarchy (Shah Pahlavi) and discourse related to current Islamic Republic
25	Saeed	With a sword in the hand.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
26	Saeed	And they changed it to a special shape between Allah	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
27	Saeed	The name of God	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
28	Saeed	With special shape like this.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
29	Saeed	Like this.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
30	Teacher	Okay.	Acknowledges explanation and information	Acknowledges connection between previous national flag and current national flag.	Acknowledges connection between discourse related to previous monarchy (Shah Pahlavi) and discourse related to current Islamic Republic
31	Saeed	They changed that lion with sun and sword	Expansion of explanation about text	Recognizes connection between current national flag and previous national flag.	Recognizes connection between discourse related to previous monarchy (Shah Pahlavi) and discourse related to current Islamic Republic
32	Saeed	To this symbol of God.	Same as above	Same as above	States social significance of connection between discourses
33	Teacher	So, it's more religious?	Question for clarification		

			and expansion		
34	Saeed	Actually, they make this like a sword.	Specifying and expanding information about text as a response	Same as above	Proposes connection between national discourse and militant discourse
35	Saeed	A sword like this.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
36	Behroz	Allah, it's written like this.	Clarifying and supporting previous response	Proposing connection between text (flag) to religious text (Allah) and calligraphy.	Same as above.
37	Behroz	But they make it like this.	Same as above	Same as above	Acknowledge connection between national discourse and militant discourse
38	Teacher	So, they made the Arabic writing for Allah	Acknowledge-ment and confirmation of shared information	Acknowledging connection between flag and religious and linguistic texts (calligraphy).	
39	Teacher	Like a sword?	Question to confirm information	Same as above	Recognizes connection between national discourse and militancy
40	Behroz	Yeah, they make it like this to this.	Response to request for confirmation	Recognizing connection between flag and religious and linguistic texts (calligraphy).	Same as above
41	Behroz	This curve reminds of a sword.	Elaboration in response to request for more information	Same as above	Same as above
42	Teacher	A sword.	Response to confirm acknowledge-ment of information	Same as above.	

43	Behroz	Because a sword have this curvy.	Expansion of explanation	Same as above.	Same as above
44	Teacher	Oh, yeah, yeah.	Acknowledge-ment of explanation	Same as above	
45	Behroz	This is the Arabic	More detailed explanation of text	Same as above.	Same as above
46	Behroz	Like a sword	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above
47	Behroz	and they put two of them this way.	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above
48	Teacher	Do you think this was on purpose?	Question to request further expansion and explanation	Suggests social significance of the connection between the flag and religious and linguistic texts (calligraphy)	Suggests social significance of connection between national discourse and militant discourse
49	Saeed	Yeah, of course.	Response to request	Confirms social significance of the connection between the flag and religious and linguistic texts (calligraphy).	Same as above
50	Teacher	Okay, this is interesting.	Sharing perspective		
51	Teacher	So, this symbolizes to them	Evaluating/ Confirming meaning of text		
52	Teacher	They're making this sign	Same as above	Same as above.	
53	Teacher	which is Arabic for Allah	Same as above	Same as above.	
54	Teacher	They made it almost like a warrior sign?	Question to invite further construction of meaning of text	Same as above.	Same as above
55	Saeed	Yeah.	Response to question	Same as above.	Same as above

56	Saeed	For example, they make a sword	Further elaboration of response to inform	Proposes a connection between text (flag) and militant text	Same as above
57	Saeed	Actually three swords.	Same as above	Same as above.	Same as above
58	Saeed	and sometimes the middle alphabet is like that.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
59	Saeed	Sometimes a big sword.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
60	Saeed	Like this.	Same as above	Same as above	
61	Saeed	Sword used for killing people.	Shares interpretation of meaning of text	Same as above	Same as above
62	Teacher	That's what it means to you?	Question to confirm interpretation		
63	Saeed	Name of God means sword.	Clarifies meaning of interpretation	Same as above	Same as above
64	Saeed	I don't like that	Shares feelings about interpretation of sign		
65	Saeed	I like the name of God.	Same as above		
66	Saeed	but not this sword.	Same as above	Same as above	Proposes alternative interdiscursive connection between national and religious discourses
67	Saeed	Sword is used for killing people.	Elaborates further on the meaning of his interpretation of sign	Same as above	Same as above
68	Saeed	And God make the people.	Same as above	Proposes alternative connection between national text and religious	Same as above

				text	
69	Teacher	Uh huh.	Response to elaboration of Saeed's interpretation		
70	Teacher	You're teaching me something.	Sharing evaluation of interpretation		
71	Teacher	That's a powerful sign.	Same as above		

Figure 3: Current Iranian Flag (Farhangsara; 2005)

Figure 4: Iranian Flag Prior to 1979 (Farhangsara; 2005)

In the data, after the teacher facilitates a connection to the sign (Iranian flag), the participants start making connections of the sign with other texts and discourses. First, Parviz connects the flag to a religious text (God), which, in turn, he then connects to national and religious discourses in Iran (06-11). Specifically, when Parviz states: "Because Iranian flag symbolize the name of God," he is proposing an explicit connection between a national text ("Iranian flag") and a religious text ("God") (07). This sets up the context for the rest of the excerpt. Parviz points out what the sign signifies to him when he states, "So, when I see Iranian flag I think of God" (11), a definitive religious connection to a political or national sign.

Saeed doesn't make an explicit connection to a religious text; however, he does propose that it is an important national symbol when he says, "It's my country and everything" (13). Thus, Saeed's response at the beginning of the excerpt is different than the response from Parviz in that he proposes a connection between the text (flag) and nationalism, but not any religious text. Merat, on the other hand, does propose a connection between the flag and a religious/political text when he refers to "Ayatollah" (17-18 & 21), which is connected to both religious and national/political discourses. The religious meaning is decidedly different from Parviz's religious connection. The meaning behind Parviz's connection is more reverent ('God'), whereas, Merat's connection is not reverent in that he connects the sign 'Ayatollah' with political leadership as a sign that signifies high status within the clerical hierarchy of Shi'a Islam.

Saeed then proposes that the flag (text) is connected to historical texts and discourses when he points out that, "They changed the sign on flag" (22). Here he shares with the group how the sign (Iranian flag) has been transformed in an historical context. Saeed describes the flag during the regime of Shah Pahlavi as a "lion with a sun in the flag" (24), and "with a sword in the hand" (25). Therefore, he describes the sign that signified the previous monarchy. He then describes how the sign/text has changed along with connected religious, national, and political discourses in Iran. For instance, he describes how the sign has changed to represent a more explicit religious text. He states, "And they changed it to a special shape between Allah, the name of God, with special shape like this" (26-28), and "They changed that lion with sun and sword to the symbol of God" (31-32). Here he describes the texts embedded within the broader text (flag). Thus, previously the text (flag) signified the monarchy, then that text was changed to a religious text—the Arabic word for God (Allah)—to represent the current theocracy. (26-27). He then reiterates, "With special shape like this" (28), which represents another meaningful text/sign.

When Saeed states, "With special shape like this" (28), he is describing a text that, from his interpretation, has connections to both religious and political discourses. He is describing a text embedded in a larger text (Iranian flag), where the Arabic word for God (Allah) is written in calligraphy and is shaped like a sword. This could signify a form of "Jihad," which can mean many different things to different people. It is clear from the data that for my participants, particularly Saeed, the sign signifies a form of militancy (61), which will be expanded on. However, based on my own understanding of Islam, as limited as it is, the sign could be interpreted in many different ways,

including waging a battle against one's own evil and corrupt desires in the quest to become a better person. An in-depth look at interpretations related to Islamic texts is beyond the scope of this study; nonetheless, it needs to be stated that there would be many interpretations of the 'sword' embedded in the Iranian flag, which would include some that have nothing to do with militancy. However, the focus of this study is on the interpretations of signs and texts made by the participants.

The participants propose, acknowledge, recognize, and state the social significance of the changes in the flag, and make connections with political, historical, and religious texts and discourses. Behroz elaborates on the social significance of the sign connected to the Islamic Republic of Iran when he declares: "Allah, it's written like this" (36), but they make it like this" (36). Here he has constructed an interpretation that through the art of calligraphy, a sign, that has explicit religious meaning, was altered to convey a meaning of militancy. The teacher acknowledges the connections the participants make (38). Behroz then clarifies and elaborates on his interpretation of the meaning of the text, which he describes as a conscious effort to make the Arabic calligraphy into a sign signifying a sword. When the teacher asks the participants, "Do you think this was on purpose?" (48), he is suggesting that there may be social significance related to the 'sword,' which is confirmed by Saeed (49). The social significance of the sign/text is elaborated on when the teacher asks rhetorically, "They made it almost like a warrior sign?" (54), and Saeed responds, "Yeah," (55).

Further on, Saeed wants to delineate the two texts, he has interpreted, that are embedded in one sign.That is, the linguistic text for God, "Allah," written in Arabic, and the text that he has interpreted to signify militancy, the Arabic calligraphy shaped

like a sword (63-68). He clearly is uncomfortable with the juxtaposition of the texts. He states, "Name of God means sword. I don't like that. I like the name of God, but not this sword; sword is used for killing people, and God make the people" (63-68). Here he is stating his desire to separate the two texts—the Arabic calligraphy signifying God, and the sword, which he has interpreted as signifying militancy. In doing so, he explicitly expresses his stance related to ideology and theology.

Thus, the discourse constructed by the participants appears to resist and oppose some of the texts and discourses embedded in the current Iranian flag, at least their interpretations of the texts and discourses embedded in the flag. At the end of the excerpt, Saeed expresses his vision of a new text, one where a sign signifying "God" and another sign depicting a sword are not connected, but clearly separated.

The participants in the preceding excerpt constructed a discourse that was both meaningful and critical. They analyzed the text (flag) and shared critical insights related to historical, religious, and political discourses with a cultural outsider. While it is probably true that the participants had formed many of the insights and perspectives before the conversation occurred, the opportunity to share their perspectives and insights in English with a cultural outsider provided the participants space to make themselves comprehensible in the target language in a cross-cultural context.

Baseball Signs

In the subsequent excerpt from the data, Merat and Saeed connect to texts related to baseball, something that they had little knowledge of in Iran. The teacher and the participants had discussed baseball in earlier classes, so there was some context. In

addition, I showed the participants a photograph from their local newspaper that showed a Red Sox player sliding across home plate. The photograph is not the focus of the conversation, although it did provide a springboard for connections to other texts. Specifically, the following conversation was connected to an episode that occurred at Saeed's work place. Saeed had shared earlier with the group that he had purchased a Yankee baseball cap in New York City when he first arrived in the United States, and that he had no idea of the significance of the meaning of the sign until an episode at his work, which is described in the subsequent excerpt. The event suggests that implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular texts can be relevant and useful for learners because these texts are often the topic of conversation in various venues.

Table 9: Excerpt 7

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Function	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	This is another picture	Connecting participants to a text		
02	Teacher	And Saeed was just talking about the Red Sox.	Informing to make a connection with a previous text	Proposes a connection between pictures of Red Sox player with previous conversational text.	Connecting to sports discourse (baseball).
03	Teacher	Right?	Question to encourage a response		
04	Teacher	And he told us that they're from Boston	Expanding information about previous text to encourage a response	Same as above	Same as above

05	Merat	Right.	Gives a response	Acknowledges connection between pictures of Red Sox player with previous conversational text.	
06	Teacher	And he's correct	Supporting response and framing the intertextual connection		
07	Teacher	You've heard about them?	Question to encourage participation		
08	Teacher	Where did you hear about the Boston Red Sox?	Same as above		Same as above
09	Saeed	Because I had a Yankee cap (Laughter from group)	Response to invitation to participate	Proposes connection between 'Red Sox' text with 'Yankee' text (baseball cap).	Same as above
10	Saeed	My boss told me not to come to work here anymore.	Elaboration of response	States social significance of intertextual connection (Boston Red Sox & New York Yankees)	Same as above
11	Saeed	Why?	Explanation		
12	Saeed	There's no Yankee cap around here.	Telling a narrative	Same as above	Same as above
13	Saeed	Get out of here.	Same as above	Same as above	
14	Saeed	He's just kidding	Qualifying explaining narrative		
15	Teacher	Okay.	Acknowl-edges narrative	Acknowledging social significance of juxtaposed texts	

16	Teacher	So, this happened in your work?	Question to invite expansion of narrative		
17	Saeed	Yeah, just kidding	Response/ explaining context		
18	Saeed	Yeah, we're outside	Same as above		
19	Teacher	And having some fun?	Question to encourage explanation		
20	Teacher	But you know, sometimes it gets serious.	Informing about alternative scenarios	Stating social significance of juxtaposed texts	Same as above
21	Saeed	Yeah, I know that	Acknow-ledges alternative meaning of sign	Acknowledging /recognizing social significance of juxtaposed texts	
22	Teacher	Who are the Yankees?	Question to begin discussion of text		Same as above
23	Saeed	In New York?	Response in question form to request more information		
24	Saeed	I don't know.	Response to signal request for more information		
25	Teacher	They're from New York.	Responds to request. Gives background information	Proposes connection between sports team with city	Same as above
26	Teacher	New York City.	Same as above	Same as above	
27	Saeed	Yeah, because the first time I went to some	Explaining context of purchase of	Acknowledges connection between city	Proposes connecting consumer discourse

		place to buy a hat it was only the Yankees hat.	sign/cap	with sign (hat)	to sports discourse (baseball).
28	Saeed	So, I picked one.	Same as above		
29	Saeed	There was no Red Sox or something.	Same as above	Suggests social significance of connection between sign (cap) and city.	
30	Teacher	Right, you just picked it up.	Restating response to encourage elaboration		Acknowledging consumer related discourse connected with 'baseball' discourse
31	Teacher	You didn't know any difference?	Question to encourage elaboration	Proposes that Saeed had no previous knowledge of the connection between sign on caps with team or city.	Same as above
32	Saeed	No, no.	Response to request for elaboration	Acknowledges that he no previous knowledge of the connection between sign on cap and city.	
33	Teacher	Because that meaning meant nothing to you?	Question to clarify/ understand what sign meant to Saeed	Recognizes that Saeed had no knowledge of the connection at the time of the purchase	
34	Saeed	Yeah.	Response to question		
35	Saeed	Because I just went in and buy it.	Elaboration		Recognizes connection between consumer related discourse and baseball/sports related discourse.
36	Saeed	I didn't know	Explanation		

		what it mean.			
37	Teacher	That sign meant nothing to you?	Question to confirm explanation		
38	Saeed	Yeah.	Response to confirm		
39	Teacher	But, it means a lot to people here	Explaining sign within socio-cultural context	Restating social significance of text.	States social significance of sports/baseball discourse
40	Teacher	Because that means the New York Yankees.	Same as above	Same as above	Same as above
41	Teacher	Okay, and these are the Red Sox	Informing to facilitate intertextual connection	Restating intertextual connection (Red Sox & Yankees)	
42	Teacher	They are very deep rivals.	Same as above	Restating social significance of intertextual connection	Same as above
43	Teacher	They've been going at each other for over a hundred years.	Explanation on socio-historical meaning of texts	Same as above	Same as above
44	Saeed	Oh, really?	Response to explanation	Acknowledging intertextual connection	Acknowledges social significance of discourse
45	Teacher	Yeah.	Confirms meaning of explanation		
46	Teacher	There are a lot of stories.	Suggests socio-cultural significance of texts	Recognizing intertextual connection	
47	Teacher	But the Red Sox fans and Yankee fans don't like each other.	Same as above	Restating social significance of intertextual connection	Stating social significance of Yankee/Red Sox discourse.
48	Teacher	Well, you know, sometimes.	Facilitates connection with		

			Saeed's narrative		
49	Teacher	But, sometimes they really do get angry with each other.	Suggests socio-cultural significance of texts	Same as above	Same as above

As the data indicates, the participants connect a text (photograph of a Red Sox player) with a previous conversation. When Saeed is asked about when he heard about the Boston Red Sox (08), he responds, "Because I had a Yankee cap" (09), which elicits laughter from the group, because they were aware of the episode at Saeed's work. Saeed then states, "My boss told me not to come to work here anymore" (10), and that he was told, "There's not Yankee cap around here, get out of here" (12-13). Fortunately, Saeed didn't take what his boss said literally. Saeed shares with the teacher, "He's just kidding" (14). Therefore, it is clear that the 'incident' at work is not serious, according to Saeed, and that his boss was 'kidding.' Nonetheless, the previous conversational text provided enough context for Saeed to understand and propose an intertextual connection between the 'Red Sox' text (photograph) and the 'Yankee' text (cap). Because of the interactions, Saeed understands and proposes social significance of the intertextual connection between the texts related to the New York Yankees and the Boston Red Sox (10), which the teacher then acknowledges (15). Thus, the participants propose, acknowledge, recognize, and state social significance of intertextual connections related to the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees (09-21). While this may represent "common knowledge" to sports fans residing in the northeastern part of the United States, it represents a learning experience for the participants from Iran.

Saeed points out that he bought the cap with the New York Yankees sign at a place in New York City without recognizing the meaning of the sign (22-32). In fact, Saeed hadn't recognized that the sign represented a sports team from New York City until the episode at work. This seems to support the concept that the consumption of popular signs, connected to global consumerism/capitalism, often doesn't connect the consumer to the meaning of the sign, constructed by the community of people that originally developed the sign, or its related discourse(s) (See Bishop, 2001). Nonetheless, the data indicates that Saeed has entered the discourse community, to a degree, through interaction with cultural insiders (his boss and the teacher) and, at the same time, he begins to make related interdiscursive connections.

First, Saeed connects to sports related discourse (baseball)—more specifically to a discourse related to the ongoing conversation between New York Yankee and Boston Red Sox fans through connected texts. Later on, he proposes a connection between consumer related discourse and sports discourse, which he now recognizes, but hadn't when he originally purchased the cap (27). This interdiscursive connection is further acknowledged and recognized by the participants (30-32), along with the social significance of the connection (39-49).

The excerpt addresses the relevance of the use of popular texts in ESL pedagogical contexts. Specifically, it shows that popular texts and discourses are frequently discussed in various settings, and that they have social significance. Thus, it is important for English language learners entering new communities to be aware of such texts and discourses.

Conclusions

The excerpts from the data presented in this chapter present meanings that the participants constructed of signs embedded in popular and other cultural texts. Through this process, as indicated in the data, the participants were able to construct meaningful intertextual and interdiscursive connections through interaction. And the excerpts show that, through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs, discourses were constructed by the participants that were both meaningful and critical. For example, the participants jointly constructed discourses related to gender, religion, and politics, among other areas. The data also indicates that critical reflection occurred during the process of joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs. For example, when Behroz observed how the media represented the 'Olympic Games,' he noticed and commented on the signs and logos connected to corporate entities that were ubiquitous in various venues in the 'Games.' He critically reflected on possible meaning and social significance of the signs. In doing so, he examined the teacher's assumptions and constructed another interpretation of corporate influence on the 'Games' that was taken up by the group, contradicting the teacher's previous assertions.

The excerpts also indicate that the construction of discourse occurred when connections were made to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, which related mostly to settings in Iran. Although most of the texts that were jointly examined by the group were 'North American' popular texts, discourse(s) were often jointly constructed by making intertextual and interdiscursive connections cross-culturally.

Therefore, through a joint examination of signs (social semiotics) embedded in popular texts, the participants were able to construct texts that showed evidence of

critical reflection. In addition, the data indicates that intertextual and interdiscursive connections (Bloome, et. al. 2005) were facilitated when connections were made that related to the participants' sociocultural worlds, which supports concepts related to sociocultural theory.

CHAPTER 5

NEGOTIATION OF MEANING OF TEXTS AND CONSTRUCTION OF JOINT DISCOURSE(S)

In this chapter, the focus of the analysis is on the negotiation of meanings of texts between the participants, and the construction of joint discourse(s) as the participants share texts from their respective sociocultural worlds. While many of the classes initially focused on a 'North American' popular text, such texts served primarily as springboards to texts related to the sociocultural worlds of the participants. Therefore, the 'North American' popular texts are mentioned; however, the focus of the analysis is on the negotiation of meaning of texts and discourses related to 'Iran,' as they were jointly constructed through cultural sharing with a cultural outsider (Teacher). In chapter 6, the content in some of the excerpts focuses almost exclusively on 'North American' texts for the purpose of showing the impact on participation structure(s).

Again, concepts such as intertextuality and interdiscoursivity are used as analytical tools (Bloome, et al., 2005), as described in chapter 2, the literature review. However, in this chapter there will be more focus in the analysis on the construction of joint discourses by the participants, and less emphasis on the construction of meaning of specific signs/texts by the participants as was the case in chapter 4, although the analysis of signs, texts, and discourses are interconnected and intertwined in both chapters. Simply put, it is a case of differences in emphasis. Thus, the focus of this chapter is to find out how and to what extent the participants construct discourse(s) that

are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs.

Gender Names in Iran

In the following excerpt from the data, the participants share cultural texts and discourses that they were familiar with from their own sociocultural backgrounds. Meanings were negotiated and constructed. The specific focus of the conversations related to the meanings of names. As the participants negotiated and constructed the meaning of the signs/texts (names), interdiscursive connections were made that related to gender, history, nationalism, religion/politics within Iranian contexts. The context or background of the conversation began with 'Teacher' showing the group a picture of a stork with two other signs connected to two babies that signified gender—signs that you would typically see on a restroom door (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, p. 502). From this text, the conversation turned to other signs that signify gender, such as color (Blue/Pink) and specific types of clothes. Then the conversation turned to signs/texts that signify gender in Iran such as names.

Table 10: Excerpt 8

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	What about names?		
02	Teacher	What are some common names for girls and what do they mean?	Proposing that there are specific texts that connect to a specific gender. Teacher seeks intertextual connection between signs that signify gender in Iran with signs discussed	

			previously.	
03	Teacher	And what are some common names for boys?	Same as above.	
04	Teacher	And what do they mean?	Same as above	
05	Teacher	Let's start with girls	Same as (02)	
06	Teacher	Name three girls…	Same as above	
07	Saeed	Maryam	Acknowledges the presupposition that names are gendered markers in Iran.	
08	Teacher	Maryam. Okay.	Recognizes connection between name and gender. Saeed is cooperating in the assignment to share 'cultural signs.'	
09	Teacher	What does Maryam mean?	Same as (02)	
10	Saeed	Maryam? Like Jesus time.	States social significance of gender related name in that Saeed connects the text/sign Maryam to important religious texts such as the Bible (And the Quran—See commentary later).	Proposes a connection between gender and religious discourse.
11	Teacher	Oh, Mary?	Recognizes connection between text (Mary) and religious text (Christian Bible). Mary/Maryam is also in the Quran, which Teacher doesn't explicitly recognize.	Recognizes connection between gender and religious discourses.
12	Saeed	Mary.		
13	Saeed	Maryam is Mary.	Confirms linguistic connection and facilitates translation for cultural outsider.	Same as above.
14	Teacher	That's interesting, so it's a Christian name.	Claims social significance of a 'Christian' name (text) in a predominately	Claims social significance of interdiscursive (gender & religion) connection.

			Islamic society. However, there isn't any uptake, which could indicate confusion or tension because Maryam is in the Quran as well (See commentary).	But no uptake (See commentary).
15	Teacher	What else?		
16	Parviz	Some times it takes a flower's name.	Proposes a connection between names of Iranian girls and names of flowers.	
17	Parviz	Like orchid. (Not clear)	Same as above	
18	Teacher	Like what?		
19	Parviz	Like…(Speaks in Farsi to Behroz)		
20	Behroz	Names like Banafsheh or Shabnab.	Clarifies proposal of connection between names of Iranian girls and names of flowers.	
21	Behroz	Shabnab means dew.	Same as above.	
22	Teacher	Like a plant?	Seeks further clarification of proposed connection of texts.	
23	Behroz	No, like dew that you see on a plant in the morning.	Modifies proposed connection.	
24	Behroz	But it depends on which kind of family you are.	Proposes another connection between names of girls and texts related to family, religion, gender, and social status.	Proposes connection between discourses related to gender, family, religion, and socio-economic status.
25	Behroz	I mean, if you are the most traditional religious family, they pick some Arabic name like Fattaneh.	Same as above.	Same as above.
26	Behroz	It's Islamic name.	Same as above.	Same as above
27	Behroz	Like Zara.	Same as above.	Same as above.
28	Behroz	All these Islamic that come from	Same as above.	Same as above.

		Quran.		
29	Behroz	Like Bahtu.	Same as above.	Same as above.
30	Behroz	I mean, if you hear Bahtu, you know what kind of family they are.	Same as above.	Same as above.
31	Teacher	You know that they are conservative Muslims.	Acknowledges connection between name related to gender and texts related to family, class and religion.	Acknowledges connection between gender, family, class and religious discourses.
32	Behroz	Conservative, yeah. You don't consider them as sophisticated.	Recognizes textual connections between gender names and religious and class texts.	Recognizes connection between gender, family, class and religious discourses.
33	Behroz	You know, this kind of family, you know they are different.	Implicitly states social significance of connection between gender names and texts related to religion and class.	Implicitly states social significance of interdiscursive connections stated above.
34	Behroz	I mean, the other names are like national kind of names.	Proposes connection to names related to gender and national/historical texts.	Proposes connection between gender discourse and national/historical discourses.
35	Behroz	Some of them come from history.	Proposes connection to names related to gender and historical/national texts.	Same as above.
36	Teacher	What, for example?		
37	Behroz	Like, for example, the boy name.	Same as above.	Same as above.
38	Behroz	Like my grandfather	Same as above.	Same as above.
39	Behroz	He used to have like Shahnameh you know.	Same as above	Same as above.
40	Behroz	Shahnameh means kind of like…	Same as above	Same as above.
41	Teacher	Follower of the Shah?	Acknowledges connection between name related to gender	Acknowledges connection between gender discourse and

			and text related to historical/national texts.	national/historical discourses.
42	Behroz	Yeah, kings.	Acknowledges intertextual connection, but modifies or corrects 'Teacher's' connection by changing to plural, which indicates multiple texts.	Same as above.
43	Teacher	The king names. Like Kouroush?	Recognizes connection between names related to gender and texts connected to historical/national texts.	Recognizes connection between gender discourse and national/historical discourses.
44	Behroz	Yes, Kouroush	Confirms connection between name and historical/national texts. (Kouroush was the name of a famous Persian king back in antiquity).	
45	Behroz	All of my uncles have king's names from ancient times.	States social significance of connection between names related to gender (males) and historical/national texts, in that his male family members are named after kings from antiquity, which is socially significant because it differs from the norm according to Behroz (50-53).	
46	Teacher	So, that's interesting, a lot of the times Persians will pick ancient names.	Same as above.	Proposes social significance of discourse about historical grandeur of classical Persia.
47	Teacher	During the classical times when the Persian Empire was great?	Same as above.	Same as above.
48	Teacher	They pick king names from then?	Same as above.	Same as above.
49	Behroz	No. I mean it depends on…		Doesn't take up or take up proposed social

				significance of discourse about historical grandeur of classical Persia.
50	Behroz	I mean, the majority of people use religious.	Proposes connection between names related to gender and religious texts.	Proposes connection between gender and religious discourses.
51	Behroz	There are lots of Ali, Husain, Hassan in Iran.	Same as above.	Same as above.
52	Behroz	They are kind of typical names you can find.	Same as above.	Same as above.
53	Behroz	These come from religious background.	Same as above.	Same as above.
54	Behroz	But they are some names,		
55	Behroz	But they are not that widespread,		
56	Behroz	But there are some foreigner names too		
57	Behroz	But government don't allow it	Proposes a connection between 'foreign' texts and domestic (Iranian) political texts.	Proposes connection between Iranian political/religious discourses and non-Iranian/non-Islamic texts and discourses specified as 'foreign.'
58	Behroz	If you want to like…		
59	Behroz	I mean, my uncle has problems.	Same as above.	
60	Behroz	He wanted to pick Mona	Proposes connection between 'foreign' text (Mona) and Iranian political texts. (See commentary)	Same as above. (Although not explicitly proposed, acknowledged, or recognized at the time of the interaction, I now believe that there are other intertextual and interdiscursive connections between the text "Mona" and

				political/religious texts and discourses). (See commentary).
61	Behroz	He wanted to pick Mona for his daughter's name	Same as above.	Same as above.
62	Behroz	But the government said no you can't.	Same as above.	Same as above.
63	Behroz	This is not Iranian	Same as above.	Same as above.
64	Behroz	Or this is foreigner	Same as above.	Same as above.
65	Saeed	It's very hard to have foreign names.	Acknowledges connection between 'foreign' texts and domestic political texts.	Acknowledges connection between Iranian political/religious discourses and non-Iranian and non-Islamic texts and discourses specified as 'foreign.'
66	Saeed	Like Eric, Mark.	Recognizes connection between 'foreign' texts and domestic political texts.	Recognizes connection between Iranian political/religious discourses and discourses specified as 'foreign.'
67	Saeed	Very hard.	Explicitly states social significance of juxtaposition of 'foreign' texts (names) and Iranian political/religious texts.	Explicitly states social significance of juxtaposition (contested) of domestic political/religious discourses and discourses specified as 'foreign.'

In the beginning of the excerpt, the 'teacher' has steered the conversation away from signs that signify gender in 'North American' contexts towards texts related to gender in Iranian contexts, when he asks, "What are some common names for girls and what do they mean?" (02). When asking the participants this question, he was proposing implicitly possible connections between texts related to gender. The 'teacher'

subsequently asks, "And what are some common names for boys?" (03). Saeed responds to the question with "Maryam," (07), a text or sign that not only signifies gender, but that is also connected to religious texts (Christian Bible & Qur'an) because it is the name in Farsi that signifies Mary, which Saeed acknowledges when he states, "Like Jesus time" (10). Subsequently, the teacher recognizes the intertextual connection once the English version of the name is stated (11). The 'teacher' points out the social significance of the intertextual connection when he exclaims: "That's interesting, so it's a Christian name" (14) implying that it is socially significant from his perspective that a 'Christian' name is given to girls in a predominately Islamic society. However, it should be pointed out that Maryam/Mary has significance in Islam and the Baha'i Faith because both religions recognize Christ as a Divine Prophet (Momen, 1985; Esslemont, 1978). Therefore, it is probable that Saeed doesn't recognize it just as a 'Christian' name as suggested by Teacher, but rather as a name connected to religion, but religion in much broader terms than what was acknowledged by Teacher at the time of the interaction. Thus, it appears that the text/sign (Maryam/Mary) was interpreted and understood differently at the time of the interaction, because Teacher did not fully understand the extent of the importance of Mary/Maryam in Islamic discourse. In the Qur'an, Jesus is sometimes referred to as 'Ibne Maryam,' or "Son of Mary," among other titles; in addition, a chapter in the Qur'an is named 'Sura Maryam' or 'Chapter Mary' in honor of the Mother of Jesus (Deedat, 26 February 2006; & Cultural informant named Maryam).

Parviz then tells the group that, "Sometimes it takes a flower's name" (16), which I have interpreted to mean an intertextual connection between unspecified names

of Iranian females and names of flowers. Parviz clarifies his meaning with the 'teacher' when he consults with Behroz in Farsi, and then Behroz shares with the group, "Names like Banafsheh or Shabnab" (20). This doesn't entirely clarify the proposal of a connection between names of Iranian females and flowers because Shabnab means 'dew' in Farsi (23) and is not a particular flower, although 'dew' can be associated with flowers. However, Banafsheh does mean 'purple flower' (Cultural informant). Thus, there is an intertextual connection between gender names and flowers.

In addition, Behroz quickly proposes another intertextual connection, when, in line 24, he states: "But it depends on which kind of family you are." Therefore, he proposes a connection between names of girls and texts related to family, class, and religion. In doing so, there are proposed interdiscursive connections between institutional discourses, namely gender, family, class, and religion. Specifically, Behroz says that "if you are the most traditional religious family, they pick some Arabic name like Fattaneh" (25). Here he is proposing an intertextual connection between gender names and religious texts. Fattaneh, an Arabic name for females, is connected to Islamic texts such as the Quran (26-28). These texts are embedded in discourses related to gender, family, and religion. He then points out three names (texts/signs)—Fattaneh, Zara, and Bahtu—as names for females that, according to him, are connected to 'traditional' (25) 'Islamic' (25-29) families. Therefore, he clearly proposes intertextual connections between texts related to gender and religion. I also interpret the text/sign 'traditional' to signify something related to socio-economic class, although that is not explicitly clear at the point of interaction. It does, however, become clearer that the negotiated meaning of the text 'traditional' is related to socio-economic class. First,

Behroz states, "I mean, if you hear Bahtu, you know what kind of family they are" (30). The 'teacher' then negotiates the meaning with Behroz in the process of constructing a joint understanding of what is meant by "…you know what kind of family they are" (30). The teacher suggests, "You know that they are conservative Muslims" (31). Behroz then responds with: "Conservative, yeah. You don't consider them as sophisticated" (32). My interpretation of the last response is that there is a complex web of intertextual and interdiscursive connections being made. First, it seems that Behroz is suggesting that if a family names a female Fattaneh, Zara, or Bahtu, or another name (text) from the same genre, you can make a generalized assumption that these names (signs/texts) can be connected to religious texts related to Islam and to a discourse related to socio-economic class (32). I make this interpretive assumption based on data from other excerpts (see the "Social Whirl" excerpt in this chapter), and that is less 'sophisticated' generally means less 'education,' which is usually equated with people who are poor and often rural. Based on conversations I have had with cultural informants, and my general awareness of discourses that exist related to class divisions and rural/urban divisions in Iran, which were negotiated and became part of the joint discourse over the eight week period of the class, this interpretation seems to make most sense. In Iran today, poverty is increasing and those living in poverty lack access to education and literacy (Mohammadi, 2005). As a consequence, class divisions are only widening, which is occurring in many other parts of the world as well. In fact, a recent popular text (film) took a hard look at class divisions in contemporary Iranian society. The film, entitled "Crimson Gold," directed by Jafar Panaki (who also directed 'White Balloon') and written by Abbas Kiarostami, takes "an unflinching look at the stark class

divisions that mark contemporary Iran" (Pena, 2003). As an indication of the sensitivity of the issue of class divisions, the film was banned by the authorities in Iran.

There is one more intertextual/interdiscursive connection that can be made, and that is Behroz seems to infer that "[less] sophisticated" is connected to level of religiosity. Specifically, people who are more 'conservative' (31-32), or more 'traditional,' would likely not only be less 'sophisticated,' they would be more likely be more religious, and thus this is part of the reason they give their daughters or sons 'traditional' Islamic names.

It should be noted that these generalizations of Iranian sociocultural patterns that were jointly constructed by the participants are just that—generalizations with myriad exceptions. Nonetheless, I have heard similar interdiscursive connections related to level of religiosity, politics, and socio-economic class from other Iranians besides the participants (One could make similar interdiscursive connections during conversations about U.S. American society as well). Institutional discourses are dynamic and they shift. In Iran, as elsewhere, religious and political discourses often conflict, and are often contested (see Jahanbakhsh, 2003).

Behroz makes a transition to talking about non-religious names. He states: "I mean, the other names are like national kind of names" (34), and "some of them come from history" (35). Here Behroz is proposing a connection between texts related to gender to national and historical texts. He then gives a specific example from his own family when he shares with the teacher the following: "Like my grandfather" (38), "he used to have like Shahnameh" (39), which is constructed to mean a name that signifies a connection to the monarchy in classical Persian history. He goes on to exclaim: "All of

my uncles have king's names from ancient times" (45). Therefore, Behroz has proposed, and the 'teacher' has recognized a connection between texts related to gender (names of males in the participant's family) with historical/national texts. On a deeper level, the association of names (signs/texts) to the names of kings from antiquity may also signify a disassociation with other texts, namely Islamic texts. Specifically, the names chosen for members of Behroz's family are pre-Islamic names that were prevalent in Persia long before the introduction of Islam to Persia via the Arab world (see Halsall, 2000). By choosing texts/names from classical Persia, the participants' relatives are connecting to non-religious texts, and associating their identities with national/historical texts and discourses instead of religious texts and discourses.

Behroz asserts that the naming pattern of his male relatives is not the norm in Iran: "I mean, the majority of people use religious, there are lots of Ali, Husayn, Hasan in Iran" (50-51), and "They are kind of typical names you can find" (52). Here he is proposing a connection between gender naming and religious texts, when he points out that the majority of boys and girls in Iran are given names associated with texts related to Islam in general, and Shi'a Islam specifically because Ali, Husayn, and Hasan are recognized Imams in Shi'a Islam (see Momen, 1985). Shi'a Islam is the dominant sect in Iran. Subsequently, Behroz adds, "there are some foreigner names too" (56), "but government don't allow it" (57).

Behroz makes the transition during the interaction to proposing that names (texts) that are considered 'foreign' face resistance from political/religious forces in Iran. He appears to be proposing that discursive connections between Iranian political and religious institutions and non-Iranian/non-Islamic texts and discourses, specified as

'foreign,' are in opposition and contested (See Thibault, 1991). In other words, Behroz states directly and by example that Iranian political/religious authorities take the introduction of perceived 'foreign' signs (names) as a threat, and, as a consequence, oppose these signs. Behroz then gives a specific example of when his uncle wanted to choose the name "Mona" for his daughter. According to Behroz, the name 'Mona' was unacceptable to authorities (62), and his uncle was not permitted to name is daughter 'Mona' because 'Mona' "…is not Iranian, or this is foreigner" (62-63). Saeed acknowledges this connection when he states: "It's very hard to have foreign names" (65). Saeed then explicitly states the social significance of the juxtaposition of 'foreign' texts (names) and Iranian political texts by stating it is "very hard" (67). Thus, the meaning constructed by the participants during the interaction was a joint discourse that suggests that when Iranian political/religious discourses connected to the current government in Iran is juxtaposed with perceived 'foreign' texts and discourses, there is often opposition, conflict, and oppression.

Before moving on to the next excerpt from the data, I need to offer another interpretation of the government authorities' opposition to the name 'Mona' because I believe that there are other texts that were not mentioned by the participants. According to my own background reading and conversations with other cultural informants, the opposition to the name 'Mona' could very well be due to an event that occurred in 1983, when the Islamic revolution in Iran was new. On June 18, 1983, a seventeen-year-old girl by the name of Mona Mahmudnizhad was publicly executed by hanging along with nine other girls and women for the offence of teaching religious (Baha'i) classes to children. The public hanging of the women and girls occurred in the city of Shiraz, Iran

(Baha'i Canada Publications, 1985; Roohizadegan, 2001). Afterwards, Mona, who was the youngest of the ten who were hanged, became a martyr for the Iranian Baha'i community, and many families named their daughters after her. I suspect that this is why the government authorities resisted and opposed the name of 'Mona.'

Persian Carpets, Labor, & Gender

The next excerpt from the data relates to a conversation that developed from the topic of what constitutes art. I had shown the participants some photographs and images of popular art and then a conversation ensued about what constitutes art. Specifically, the 'springboard' text was a photograph of '100 Soup Cans' by Andy Warhol (Silverman & Rader, 2003, p. 484). The conversation then changed with Merat claiming that Persian silk carpets signify 'real art.' Merat was not impressed with the example of 'popular art.' Finally, the conversation changed to one about labor and gender that was connected to the making of the silk carpets. As the excerpt will show, intertextual and interdiscursive connections from the discussion about Persian silk carpets as 'real art' develop through interaction between the participants.

Table 11: Excerpt 9

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Merat	Silk carpet, that's real art	Proposes connection between Persian silk carpets and concepts of art.	
02	Teacher	Real art?		
03	Merat	Lot of time.	Proposes connection between Persian silk carpets and texts related to intensity of	

			labor.	
04	Merat	Care a lot.	Same as above.	
05	Merat	Very difficult to make it.	Same as above.	
06	Teacher	Yeah, they're beautiful, silk carpets.	Acknowledges connection between Persian silk carpets and concepts of art.	
07	Teacher	You don't even want to walk on them.	Same as above.	
08	Teacher	You want to hang them on a wall.	Same as above.	
09	Behroz	Yeah, if you see how long does it take to make them.	Acknowledges connection between Persian silk carpets and texts related to intensity of labor.	
10	Behroz	Their eyes doesn't last much because so many tiny, tiny knots.	Same as above.	Proposes connection between labor discourse and production/business discourse.
11	Teacher	Silk carpets?		
12	Behroz	Yeah, I mean when they are designed.		Same as above.
13	Behroz	This kind of shape		
14	Behroz	They are very tiny, very tiny.		Same as above.
15	Behroz	And they should read those and do exactly what it says.	Recognizes connection between Persian silk carpets and texts related to intensity of labor.	Same as above
16	Behroz	Thousands of them, and they do it one by one by one.	Same as above.	Same as above.
17	Behroz	They don't usually last because their eyes get…	Same as above.	Same as above.
18	Teacher	Bad.	Same as above.	Acknowledges connection between labor discourse and production/business discourse.
19	Behroz	Bad, yes.	Same as above.	
20	Behroz	After twenty years	States social	States social

		they don't see anything.	significance of intertextual connection between Persian silk carpets and intense labor over time.	significance of connection between labor discourse and production/business discourse.
21	Behroz	And they start going blind.	Same as above.	Same as above.
22	Teacher	And they're mostly men who do this or women?	Proposes connection between labor texts related to Persian silk carpets and gender texts.	Proposes connection between gender discourse and labor discourse connected to the production of Persian carpets.
23	Behroz	Women.	Acknowledges connection between labor texts related to Persian silk carpets and gender texts.	Acknowledges connection between gender discourse and labor discourse connected to the production of Persian carpets.
24	Teacher	Only women do it?	Recognizes connection between labor texts related to Persian silk carpets and gender texts.	Recognizes connection between gender discourse and labor discourse connected to the production of Persian carpets.
25	Behroz	Currently, some men are doing it right now.		
26	Behroz	But use to be only a women job.	Same as above.	Same as above.
27	Teacher	That's hard.		
28	Behroz	The place they're working is sometimes dark.		
29	Behroz	Not a good place at all.	States social significance of gender texts related to labor texts connected to Persian silk carpets.	States social significance of gender discourse juxtaposed with labor and business discourses.
30	Behroz	It's tough.	Same as above.	Same as above.

In the beginning of the excerpt, Merat proposes a connection between Persian silk carpets and 'real art' (01). Then he makes a proposed connection between Persian silk carpets as art and intensity of labor (according to a cultural insider, silk carpets are considered the highest quality, and the most difficult to make of any hand made carpet). I have interpreted Merat's intertextual connection as meaning that 'real art' takes real, intense work (03). He develops this construction by stating, "Care a lot" (04), and "Very difficult to make it" (05). The 'teacher' responds by acknowledging the connection between Persian silk carpets and concepts of art when he states, "Yeah, they're beautiful, silk carpets" (06). The 'teacher' then further develops the construction of Persian silk carpets as art by suggesting: "You don't even want to walk on them" (07), and "You want to hang them on a wall" (08). However, that was as far as the connection between Persian silk carpets as art went during the interaction; thus, the intertextual connection is not fully recognized, nor is the social significance stated.

However, Merat's proposed intertextual connection between Persian silk carpets and texts related to the intensity of labor does develop (03). For instance, Behroz acknowledges the connection when he says, "Yeah, if you see how long does it take to make them" (09). He reiterates this acknowledgement of the connection between intense hard labor and the making of Persian silk carpets when he says, "Their eyes doesn't last much because so many tiny, tiny knots (10). Behroz'statement acknowledges intertextual connections between texts related to the making of Persian silk carpets and texts related to the intensity of labor of Persian carpet making, which in turn can connect to larger labor and business/economic discourses (9-10). Behroz elaborates more as he recognizes and states how intense the labor is related to making

Persian silk carpets. For instance, he claims: "Thousands of them, and they do it one by one by one" (16). Subsequently, he points out the social significance of the connection between intense labor and making Persian silk carpets: "After twenty years they don't see anything" (20). Again, there is also an implicit interdiscursive connection between labor discourse and business discourse (20). This brief interaction, then, makes intertextual and interdiscursive connections that are proposed, acknowledged, and recognized with stated social significance (Bloome, et al., 2005, p. 144). What the participants negotiate, as far as meaning is concerned, is related to the harsh conditions that workers endure when making carpets and some of the social consequences of those harsh working conditions, including going blind.

The 'teacher' then proposes a new intertextual connection (22), when he asks: "And they're mostly men who do this or women?" That is, he proposes a connection between labor texts related to the making of Persian silk carpets and gender-related texts. Behroz quickly acknowledges a connection between labor texts and gender texts, when he responds, "Women" (23). In turn, these intertextual connections are embedded in broader gender, labor, and business/economic discourses (22-24). The 'teacher' then asks: "Only women do it?" (24), and Behroz clarifies or modifies the statement by declaring: "Currently, some men are doing it right now" (25), as if men doing it is unusual and a response to an unusual economic exigency. I have interpreted this response as meaning that under normal circumstances, carpet making in Iran is primarily the work of girls and women, unless dire economic circumstances exist such as high unemployment, which might compel some males to go into carpet making as Behroz alludes to: "But use to be only a women job" (26) Another cultural informant

told me that carpet makers are primarily female, although male children and adults are carpet makers as well. It should be pointed out that the Iranian government claims that no children under the age of fifteen are working in the carpet making industry (Eiland, 28 February 2006). However, that claim conflicts with what both my participants and cultural informant have stated. It is widely agreed that carpet laborers are almost all poor and rural (see "Good carpets & poor weavers", 2005, p. 6.). Lastly, the participants state the social significance of the juxtaposition of texts related to gender and carpet making when Behroz suggests: "Not a good place at all" (29), and "It's tough" (30). Again, these texts are related to broader gender, labor, and business discourses (29-30).

The broader and deeper meaning of the intertextual connections that the participants constructed in this excerpt is the socioeconomic status of girls and women, particularly poor and often rural girls and women. Through negotiation, a joint discourse was developed between the participants that related to socioeconomic injustice for poor, rural females. What was learned, primarily by the teacher, was that girls and women painstakingly make carpets through very hard, tedious labor. Many of these girls and women eventually go blind. Although it was not explicitly stated in this excerpt, carpet making is also connected to class and urban/rural discourses that have been discussed elsewhere, because the female carpet workers are primarily poor and rural (village dwellers). In fact, "A major goal of carpet production today is to raise the standard of living so that the rural poor do not migrate to the cities" (Eiland, 28 February 2006, p. 3) The Persian carpet industry is huge, and provides an important export for the Iranian economy; thus, this excerpt is also related to business/economic discourses as alluded to. There are many merchants in Iran, who are primarily male,

who have become very wealthy trading carpets both domestically and internationally, although the carpet industry in Iran is under pressure from 'foreign' competition and apparently is not as profitable as it has been in the past (Eiland, 28 February 2006). Nonetheless, the profits that are made are not shared equitably with the workers who make the carpets, and the carpet makers suffer from poor working conditions as pointed out by the participants and others ("Good carpets & poor weavers" 2005, p. 6). However, this inequitable state of affairs is hardly unique to Iran; it is a global issue, and it relates to labor and business discourses and practices at the global level. What is relevant to this study is that through the sharing of cultural texts and discourses, learning occurred through meaningful negotiation of a joint discourse that related to gender, socio-economic class, and social justice issues. In hindsight, after analyzing the data, it would have been useful for expanding critical reflection and discourse to have included a text for the class specifically related to workers in the carpet industry.

The Women's Movement in Iran

The following interaction between the participants developed after the participants read an article that was a review of the movie "Stepford Wives" (Ebert, 2004). After a brief discussion of the content of the article, where the 'teacher' dominated the conversation with minimal input from the participants, the women's movement in Iran became the focal point of discussion. In other words, after a brief discussion about gender-related discourse in the United States, which was related to a popular text, the conversation shifted to gender-related discourse within an Iranian

context. Then interdiscursive connections related to gender, politics, economics, law, family, and class developed, which the data will show.

Table 12: Excerpt 10

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	Is there a women's movement in Iran?	Proposes a connection between gender/ feminist texts and political texts in Iran.	Proposes connection between gender/feminist and political discourses in Iran.
02	Merat	Yes.	Acknowledges a connection between gender/feminist texts and political texts in Iran.	Acknowledges connection between gender/feminist and political discourses in Iran.
03	Teacher	There is?		
04	Merat	But, not too big.	Recognizes connection between gender/feminist texts and political texts in Iran.	Recognizes connection between gender/feminist and political discourses in Iran.
05	Teacher	What's going on in the women's movement in Iran?		
06	Merat	They want to have more power.	Explicitly states social significance of the juxtaposed texts (gender/feminist & political texts).	States social significance of the juxtaposed discourses (gender/feminist & political discourses in Iran).
07	Merat	They don't want to just sit in the house.	Same as above.	Same as above.
08	Merat	Clean house and all that.	Same as above.	Same as above.
09	Merat	They want a job.	Same as above.	Same as above.
10	Merat	They want to go to the XXXX (Can't decipher)		
11	Teacher	Cinema?	Seeks further clarification.	
12	Merat	No.		
13	Teacher	Parliament?	Same as above.	

14	Merat	Yes, more freedom.	Elaborates on political texts related to gender/feminist texts.	Same as above.
15	Merat	Things like this.		
16	Behroz	I mean, first of all…		
17	Behroz	It's considered bad if women work outside.	Proposes a connection between gender texts and economic/work place texts.	Proposes a connection between gender/feminist discourse and economic/business discourses in Iran.
18	Behroz	I mean, the old people…	Expands proposed connection to include generational texts.	Expands interdiscursive connections to include gender, economic, and age.
19	Behroz	The traditional people…	Expands/modifies proposed intertextual connections to include texts related to family and religious texts (See previous excerpt related to names as texts).	Expands proposed interdiscursive connections to include gender, economic, age, class, family, and religion (See previous excerpt related to 'names' about what 'traditional' was constructed to mean).
20	Behroz	They usually don't allow the women…		
21	Teacher	To work outside the home?	Acknowledges intertextual connection between texts related to gender, family, and economics.	Acknowledges interdiscursive connections between gender, family and economics.
22	Behroz	Yes.	Recognizes the intertextual connections stated above.	Recognizes the interdiscursive connections stated above.
23	Behroz	I mean, it was the old time.	Modifies and shares historical text.	Gives historical context to interdiscursive connections mentioned.
24	Behroz	Now it's better.	Same as above.	Same as above.
25	Behroz	Before they said women don't need education.	States social significance of the intertextual connections.	States social significance of interdiscursive connections between gender/feminist, family, and economics.

26	Behroz	Because they don't need it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
27	Behroz	Now they want to get out.	Proposes a connection between gender and legal texts in Iran that are in conflict.	Same as above.
28	Behroz	A little basic freedom.	Same as above. (See commentary)	Proposes a connection between gender and legal discourses in Iran that are in conflict.
29	Behroz	It's the basic right.	Same as above.	
30	Behroz	Women can't travel alone in Iran.	Same as above. Women's right to travel alone and legal text(s) that disallow it	Same as above.
31	Teacher	Is that right?	Seeks clarification of intertextual connection.	Seeks clarification of interdiscursive connection.
32	Behroz	Yeah.	Acknowledges and confirms intertextual connection related to a women's right to travel freely alone.	Acknowledges connection between gender and legal discourses.
33	Behroz	They need a signature from their husband.	Expands proposed intertextual connection to include gender, family, and legal texts, related to the right for women to travel freely.	Expands proposed connection to include discourses related to gender, law, and family in Iran.
34	Behroz	No single women can go into a hotel.	Same as above.	Same as above.
35	Behroz	Usually when there is a divorce the father is considered the most influential.	States social significance of intertextual connections between gender, family, and law in Iran. Specifically, texts connected to women's lack of rights in a divorce.	States social significance of discursive connections between gender, law, and family.
36	Behroz	The children go to him.	Same as above.	Same as above.
37	Behroz	Everything goes to him.	Same as above.	Same as above.

38	Teacher	The children do?	Acknowledges connection between gender, family and legal texts in Iran.	Acknowledges connection between gender, family, and legal discourses in Iran.
39	Behroz	Yeah.		
40	Behroz	If the father is capable.		
41	Behroz	He's not a drug addict.		
42	Behroz	Always the children go to father.	States social significance between gender (patriarchy) text that is connected to texts related to family and the law.	States social significance of juxtaposed gender, family and legal discourses.
43	Behroz	Always.	Same as above.	Same as above.
44	Behroz	I mean they have no right.	Same as above.	Same as above.
45	Behroz	The man could divorce them anytime he wants.	Same as above.	Same as above.
46	Behroz	The woman can't divorce a man.	Same as above.	Same as above.
47	Behroz	And then when they divorce, the women get nothing.	Same as above.	Same as above.
48	Behroz	Because they had nothing before.	Same as above.	Same as above.
49	Behroz	It's not like America, half and half.	Proposing juxtaposition of legal texts in Iran related to gender and family, and corresponding legal and family texts in the United States.	Proposing juxtaposition of legal discourses in Iran with legal discourses in the United States.
50	Behroz	They get whatever they had made up before.	Qualifies earlier intertextual connection in Iran between legal, family, and gender texts (Women's legal rights in a divorce).	Proposing another connection between gender, family and legal discourses.
51	Behroz	Twenty coin of gold, like that.	Same as above.	Same as above.
52	Behroz	When they divorce the husband have to give that.	Same as above.	Same as above.

53	Behroz	Usually it's not a lot.	Same as above.	Same as above.
54	Behroz	Single women, it's very hard for them.	Proposing connection between gender text (single women) and broader socio-cultural texts, such as family, economic, and legal texts.	
55	Behroz	Everybody looks at them a certain way.	Same as above.	
56	Behroz	They don't have…		
57	Behroz	It's like they're holding their breath.	Suggests social consequences of the juxtaposed texts stated above.	
58	Behroz	It's very hard for women.	Here he broadens text to include all women.	
59	Behroz	It's like for inheritance.	Proposes connection between gender texts (women) and legal texts related to inheritance.	Proposes connection between gender, and legal discourses.
60	Behroz	When you go to court in Iran, two women, one man.	Same as above.	Recognizes connection between gender and legal discourses.
61	Behroz	Two women is equal to one man.	Same as above.	Same as above.
62	Teacher	Two women are equal to one man?	Acknowledges connection between gender texts (women) and legal texts related to inheritance.	Acknowledges connection between gender and legal discourses in Iran.
63	Behroz	Basically, in the law it's half the man.	Same as above.	Same as above.
64	Behroz	It's not considered a full person.	States social significance of juxtaposed texts (women & legal texts related to inheritance in Iran).	States social significance of connection between gender and legal discourses.
65	Behroz	Half the man, always.	Same as above.	Same as above.
66	Behroz	When they inherit it's half the man.	Same as above.	Same as above.
67	Behroz	When they, for example, have an	Proposes a connection between gender and	Same as above.

		accident and they die, they pay half the price they pay for a man to compensate for the loss.	texts related to insurance.	
68	Behroz	Everything is half.	Same as above.	Same as above.
69	Behroz	It's very bad for them.	Same as above.	Same as above.
70	Behroz	They can't get job.	Proposes intertextual connection between gender and economic and work place texts in Iran.	Proposes connection between gender and economic discourses.
71	Behroz	If they can, their salary is half, even less than half.	Same as above	Same as above.
72	Behroz	I mean, it's no good to be a woman in Iran.	Proposes connection between gender text in Iranian context, and broad socio-cultural texts.	
73	Teacher	Do you have anything else to say about that?		
74	Teacher	Do you know the women's movement?	Proposes connection between gender and political texts in Iran.	Proposes connection between gender and political discourses in Iran.
75	Teacher	You were talking about the women's movement.	Same as above.	Same as above.
76	Teacher	What do you know about it?	Same as above.	Same as above.
77	Teacher	What have you seen about it?	Same as above.	Same as above.
78	Merat	About a month ago, or two months ago, they come like…(Consults with Behroz in Farsi)	Acknowledges connection between gender and political texts in Iran (Women's political demonstration).	Acknowledges connection between gender and political discourses in Iran.
79	Behroz	Demonstration	Recognizes connection between gender and political texts in Iran (Women's political demonstration).	Recognizes connection between gender and political discourses in Iran.

80	Merat	They come together like a big…so many women.	Same as above.	Same as above.
81	Merat	In Teheran.	Same as above.	Same as above.
82	Merat	The police came over there to try to separate them and go home and all that.	States social significance of gender (women demonstrating) juxtaposed with political/legal texts (Police enforcing ban on demonstration).	States social significance of juxtaposed gender and political discourses.
83	Merat	Something happened and they catch some of the women, a big thing.	Same as above.	Same as above.
84	Merat	They don't let women go together and say something.	Same as above.	Same as above.
85	Merat	They're scared.	Same as above.	
86	Teacher	They don't let women come together?	Recognizes social significance of juxtaposed gender and political texts as constructed.	Recognizes social significance of the connection between gender and political discourses.
87	Merat	Not too many.	Begins to qualify role of gender in the interconnection of texts (Legal text that prohibits public demonstrations).	
88	Teacher	Not too many come together?		
89	Merat	Yes, no man, nobody.	Same as above.	
90	Teacher	Nobody comes together.	Recognizes modification of the construction of the juxtaposition of the political text (No large gatherings permitted by government) regardless of gender.	Recognizes modification of the construction of the juxtaposition of gender and political discourses in this interaction.
91	Merat	But the women did that, there was too many.	Restates the significance of the meaning of women	Restates the social significance of the connection between

			(gender) meeting in large numbers defying a political text written by government authorities.	gender (women) meeting in large numbers in a political demonstration.
92	Behroz	It was like a demonstration.	Same as above.	Same as above.
93	Merat	Yeah.	Same as above.	Same as above.
94	Teacher	Oh, a feminist demonstration?	Same as above.	Same as above.
95	Behroz	They can't go to stadium to watch football.	Proposes another gender text (what women can't do in Iran) contested with political/legal texts in Iran.	Proposes another connection between gender and legal discourses in Iran.
96	Behroz	They can't drive bicycles.	Same as above.	Same as above.
97	Teacher	They can't drive a bicycle?	Acknowledges connection between what women can't do in Iran and legal/political texts.	Acknowledges another connection between gender and legal discourses in Iran.
98	Behroz	Yeah, it's a rule, they can't.	Recognizes connection between text that states what women can't do in Iran and legal texts.	Recognizes another interdiscursive connection between gender and legal discourse.
99	Merat	They can't.	States social significance of juxtaposed gender and political/legal texts in Iran.	States social significance of interconnected gender and legal discourses in Iran.

At the start of the excerpt, the teacher proposes a connection between gender/feminist texts and political texts in Iran when he asks: "Is there a women's movement in Iran?" (01). (I will use both gender and feminist as labels to describe the genre of many of the texts in this section, because I believe they are both relevant when describing the meaning being constructed within the group.) As stated earlier, this

discussion was connected to a discussion about women and women's rights that occurred as a result of the participants reading a popular text, a review about a movie entitled "The Stepford Wives" (Ebert, 2004). That is, they connected to a review (text) that was about a movie that was a satire of an earlier text (movie) that was more of a 'horror' movie. In turn, both movies were connected (by Hollywood standards) to an earlier text (Novel) written in 1972 that takes a satirized look at paternalistic attitudes of men towards women (Ebert, 2004, pp. E4 & E7). It was this discourse—paternalism and male dominance over women—that provided a springboard to a similar discourse related to Iran. Thus, Merat responds to the teacher's question by acknowledging a connection between gender/feminist texts and political texts in Iran, when he responds, "yes" (01). He then quickly qualifies his response by stating, "But, not too big" (04), suggesting that a women's movement in Iran is nascent and small. Nonetheless, there is recognition, and when the 'teacher' asks: "What's going on in the women's movement in Iran?" (05), Merat replies: "They want to have more power" (06), which indicates social significance. Therefore, there appears to be an intertextual construction between the participants that is proposed, acknowledged, recognized with stated social significance that relates to a women's movement in Iran; therefore, it can be inferred that the intertextual construction is connected to larger gender and political discourses. When Merat explicitly states the social significance of the juxtaposed texts when he claims, "They want to have more power" (06), which means, as I interpret it, that some women want more power (political and socio-economic) in Iran. He then elaborates further, "They don't want to just sit in the house, clean house and all that" (07-08), and "They want a job" (09). The discourse that Merat is constructing, when describing what

he perceives to be how many women feel in Iran, could also be connected to feminist discourse in the United States. It should be stated that there must be diversity of opinion amongst women in Iran. That is, many women in Iran may feel comfortable with their 'traditional' roles and may not wish to work outside the home as Merat depicted. However, the focus is on the texts that the participants constructed.

Later on in the excerpt, Behroz proposes a connection between a text related to gender and economic/work place texts when he proposes that "It's considered bad if women work outside" (17). Then he expands or broadens proposed intertextual connections by adding: "I mean, the old people…" (18), and "The traditional people" (18). By adding "…old people" (18), Behroz appears to be constructing a connection between a text related to gender and a text related to age or generation in Iran. My interpretation of his construction is that he means that in the main, older people in Iran are more resistant to social change; therefore, 'old people' are more resistant to change in gender roles or women. In other words, 'old people' would consider it bad if 'women work outside' (17). He also add that 'traditional people' (18) would also be people who would resist social change in Iran, and, therefore, would resist the notion of women working outside the home. The text 'traditional people,' as constructed by Behroz, is more complicated than 'old people' which is quite clear. I interpret Behroz's meaning of 'traditional people' to be connected to not only age related texts ('old people'), but to religious, class, and rural/urban texts as delineated elsewhere. In other words, Behroz seems to have constructed the textual meaning of 'traditional people' (See sections related to 'Names' and 'Social Whirl') as people who are, generally speaking, more religious, more rural, and from a lower socio-economic class than other Iranians.

Therefore, in developing this construction during the interaction, he is also making connections to larger religious and socio-economic class discourses. Yet, Behroz modifies or qualifies his claims about the status of women by claiming that, "Now it's better" (24), and "Before they said women don't need education" (25). Thus, while he is stating the social significance of the juxtaposed texts and related discourses connected to gender, family background, and socio-economic class, he is also qualifying his claims by suggesting that from a historical context, gender based social practices are changing over time, and that women today in Iran are experiencing greater access to resources such as education than what occurred in the past (25-26), although by inference one can conclude that Behroz does not mean the same level of access as males have.

Behroz then proposes a connection between gender and legal texts and discourses in Iran when he states: Now they want to get out," and "A little more freedom" (27-28). He also states: "It's the basic right" (29). Islamic texts, such as the Qur'an, have explicitly provided protections and rights for women from the very beginning of the Islamic dispensation; however, it is unclear what specific text he is referring to, but it appears on the surface to be referring to U.S. American discourses and texts, which is possible since Behroz had been living in the U.S. for longer than two years at the time of the study. However, similar texts and discourses can be found in Behroz's own sociocultural world, namely Baha'i texts. The concept of the equality of women and men and 'basic right(s)' for women are concepts embedded in Baha'i texts as well (Esslemont, 1978).

When Behroz states: "Women can't travel alone in Iran" (30), it appears that he is proposing that legal texts in Iran prohibit women from freely traveling alone, and "Now they want to get out" (27) and have "A little basic freedom" (28). When interpreting the above data, one should keep in mind that legal texts in Iran and elsewhere are often and usually are connected to texts related to family/tribal/cultural traditions and religious texts among others. Under the current theocracy in Iran, it is hard to underestimate the intertextual connection between legal and religious (Islamic) texts. 'Ordinary law' in Iran is based on Islamic law, and "the Islamic Consultative Assembly is responsible for the provision of the ordinary law" (Habibzadeh, 2005, p. 5). The principle text in which Islamic law is derived from is the Qur'an (Habibzadeh, 2005, p. 9). It should also be kept in mind that with any text, there are myriad interpretations, and that is certainly true of religious texts.

The 'teacher' seeks clarification of the connection (31), and Behroz acknowledges and confirms the construction of an intertextual connection between texts related to women and legal texts (See 32). He then expands on this to include a proposed intertextual connection to include family texts as Behroz claims: "They need a signature from their husband" (33). Thus, he constructs an interdiscursive connection to include discourses related to gender, law, and family in Iran (33). He gives an example of the connection when he states: "No single woman can go into a hotel" (34), which obviously means that no woman can go into a hotel alone. Behroz further develops the meaning of the intertextual connections when he shares with the participants the social significance of the connections: "Usually when there is a divorce the father is considered the most influential," (35) and "The children go to him" (36), and finally,

"Everything goes to him" (37). Here Behroz is clearly showing the social consequences of the connection between texts related to family, religion, and contemporary Iranian legal texts—in particular, legal texts related to family law. That is, the participants appeared to construct a joint discourse depicting women in Iran that are disadvantaged when it comes to family law, and that male privilege is explicitly stated in legal texts in Iran as Behroz develops further. For instance, in the case of divorce, Behroz claims: "Always the children go to father" (42), although he does qualify this claim by stating: "If the father is capable" (40), and "He's not a drug addict" (41). Then he continues to describe how gender, from his perspective, is treated in legal texts when he states, "I mean they have no right. The man could divorce them anytime he wants; the woman can't divorce a man. And then when they divorce, the woman get nothing because they had nothing before" (44-48). Thus, Behroz expands on the social significance of gender texts (patriarchy) that are connected to texts related to the law, which appears to be an intertextual construction. A counter-interpretation that I have heard from a cultural informant is that many of the texts described exist for the 'protection' of women and should not be viewed as a form of 'oppression.'

Behroz compares the juxtaposition of his perception of legal texts in Iran related to gender and family with his perception of corresponding legal texts in the United States. Behroz interprets or constructs U.S. American legal texts related to gender and family as being equitable: "It's not like America, half and half" (49). Behroz proposes this intertextual connection; however, the proposed connection is not taken up again and is never acknowledged, recognized or given social significance by the participants. Instead, Behroz qualifies intertextual connections made earlier. Specifically, in his

earlier construction of an intertextual connection dealing with women and divorce in Iran, he states, "And then when they divorce, the women get nothing" (47). Yet, later he qualifies that claim by stating, "They get whatever they had made up before" (50). Then he elaborates: "Twenty coin of gold, like that," and "When they divorce the husband have to give that, usually it's not a lot" (51-53). Nonetheless, even with the qualifications, Behroz constructs a discourse that depicts Iranian legal texts as biased against women. The context of this discourse that Behroz constructs, as alluded to earlier, is that he has been influenced by texts, notably Baha'i texts, that have influenced his worldview in different ways from what could be defined as the 'dominant culture' in Iran in regards to the topic of 'rights for women,' even as Baha'i theological teachings accept the Qur'an as a Divine Text, and Mohammad as a Divine Prophet (Esslemont, 1978). It is also probable that he has been influenced by texts and discourses that he has encountered while living and going to college in the United States in regards to the topic of 'rights of women.'

Behroz also proposes a connection between a gender-related text (single women) and texts related to family, economy, and the law. He states, "Single women, it's very hard for them" (54). It's a broad statement, and I interpret this statement as an attempt to connect another gender-related text (single women) with legal-related texts that were constructed by the group earlier—in other words, texts related to family and the law. As suggested earlier, this intertextual connection is interpreted to mean that women, particularly single women, experience different treatment in accordance with patriarchal texts that relate to family and the law. As Behroz elaborates, "Everybody looks at them a certain way; it's like they're holding their breath" (56-57), which

suggests an oppressive state of affairs for single women in Iran, at least as Behroz interprets the situation. However, in this interaction the other participants remain silent and don't jointly develop the construction by acknowledging and recognizing the connection.

Behroz then proposes another connection between gender and legal texts related to inheritance. He says, "It's like for inheritance, when you go to court in Iran, two women, one man" (59-60). Then he clarifies his meaning: "Two women is equal to one man" (61). Thus, he is proposing an intertextual connection that explicitly highlights how gender is addressed in legal texts in Iran. The teacher acknowledges the connection that Behroz proposes (62). Then Behroz states the social significance of the juxtaposed texts by stating the following: "Basically, in the law it's half the man; it's not considered a full person; half the man always; when they inherit it's half the man" (63-66). "It's" refers to women, and I do not believe there was any conscious decision on the part of Behroz to denigrate women by using "it's"; it is simply a grammatical issue; one can easily make that determination considering that Behroz's discourse is empathetic towards the legal and social standing of women in Iran. The meaning of his proposed intertextual connection is clear: women are not treated the same in accordance with legal texts in Iran, whether the texts specifically relate to divorce law or inheritance law.

Behroz then proposes yet another text between gender (women in Iran) and texts related to compensation in Iran when he claims: "When they, for example, have an accident and they die, they pay half the price they pay for a man to compensate for the loss" (67). This proposed connection is not taken up by the others, so it isn't

acknowledged or recognized. This may have been because the other participants did not have the same level of fluency in English as Behroz, so that may have negatively impacted participation, which is an issue that is addressed comprehensively in chapter 6. Nonetheless, it is an interesting observation, and it could also be looked at as additional evidence of the social significance of many of the texts mentioned in the section that construct meaning related to the significance gender has in Iranian legal texts.

Behroz continues to propose intertextual and interdiscursive connections related to gender. For instance, he claims, "They can't get a job" (70), and "If they can, their salary is half, even less than half" (71). Thus, he makes connections between gender (women) and economic and workplace texts in Iran.

The 'teacher' attempts to go back to the original question about a possible women's movement (74) by directing a question towards Merat. Merat acknowledges a connection by mentioning a women's political demonstration, although he has to consult with Behroz in Farsi to convey his meaning with the 'teacher' (78). What is acknowledged and recognized by the participants is the connection of texts that relate to gender and politics; specifically, a women's political demonstration in Teheran. It is my understanding that a women's demonstration demanding rights is extremely rare and very dangerous because they would likely encounter intense opposition from Revolutionary Guards and from the Basij (a paramilitary force that enforces perceived notions of Islamic law, mores, and codes of behavior (see Siamdoust, 2005). Merat adds, "They come together like a big…so many women in Teheran. The police came over there to try to separate them and go home and all that" (80-82). Then Merat shares

with the participants the danger the women encountered when he says, "Something happened and they catch some of the women, a big thing" (83). Not only is Merat describing the danger of such an event, he is also constructing a text that highlights gender-oriented resistance. Then Merat adds: "They don't let women go together and say something; they're scared" (84-85). It appears that Merat is constructing a text that is delineating gender-oriented resistance in Iran. And he also adds, "They're scared," which is ambiguous, but which I interpret to mean that the authorities are 'scared.' In other words, the authorities who are writing the legal and political texts are 'scared' of opposition and resistance to the texts by people (in this case, women) in Iran.

Merat does qualify or modify the role of gender as a factor in the conflict between legal and political texts and people who wish to gather to demonstrate. Merat and the teacher negotiate meaning that suggests that the government doesn't allow any large group of people to publicly demonstrate, regardless of gender (86-90). Yet, Merat restates the social significance of women meeting in large numbers in a public place, defying or resisting political and legal texts written by government authorities (91).

At the end of the excerpt, the participants propose, acknowledge, recognize, and state social significance of other political and legal texts that specifically restrict women in Iran and their texts and discourses. For example, the participants describe a law that prohibits women to ride bicycles and another text that prohibits women to attend football (soccer) games (95-99).

In sum, there were several intertextual and interdiscursive connections made. However, the main focus of the interaction in the excerpt is the interdiscursive relationship between gender/feminist discourse and legal discourse in Iran. In the

process of interacting about these discourses, the participants appeared to have constructed a joint discourse about women in Iran who are treated differently under legal texts. Specifically, texts that won't permit them to travel freely, texts that put them at a disadvantage in a divorce, texts that state that women are worth 'half' what men are worth, and texts that prohibit women to engage in activities such as riding a bike or attending a soccer match. Thus, in the process of negotiating the meanings of intertextual and interdiscursive connections with a cultural outsider, the participants appeared to jointly construct new texts and a discourse that focused on recognizing gender and the importance of gender equality and rights under a set of legal texts. I would argue that this is meaningful and an example of the participants constructing critical discourse.

'Social Whirl': The Rural/Urban Divide

The subsequent table of data displays a conversation that occurred after the teacher presented the participants with an old National Geographic photograph entitled "The Social Whirl" that shows men performing a "traditional Pashtun folk dance" in southwestern Afghanistan (June 2002). As the teacher, I chose the photograph because I thought it would stimulate conversation related to culture and history, and I was curious about cultural connections between the ethnic group photographed, which exists right across the border from Iran, and ethnic groups that exist in Iran. As the transcript will show, there was resistance to this cultural connection on the part of one of the participants, although it was embraced by another participant. The resistance by one of

the participants is most likely due to the exotic nature of the photograph and his identity as a city dweller, which will be explained later on.

Table 13: Excerpt 11

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	Okay, let's go to this next one, this last one here.		
02	Teacher	Have you ever seen this before?	Proposes connection of text from National Geographic with texts from Iran.	
03	Teacher	How would you describe this picture?	Same as above.	
04	Parviz	Some special dance.	Acknowledges connection between texts.	
05	Teacher	Special dance?		
06	Parviz	A country dance.	Recognizes connection between texts.	
07	Teacher	A country dance?		
08	Teacher	Have you ever seen anything like this?		
09	Parviz	Yes.	Same as above.	
10	Parviz	On T.V.	Same as above.	
11	Teacher	On T.V?		
12	Parviz	Yep.	Same as above.	
13	Behroz	It's not like many people do that.	Recognizes texts, and states social significance of the texts.	
14	Behroz	In the southern part of Iran, near Afghanistan and Pakistan.	Gives explanation of text, and distances himself from text.	
15	Behroz	It's like a state.	Same as above.	
16	Behroz	They are all close to Pakistan.	Same as above.	
17	Parviz	They're called Baluch.	Same as above.	
18	Teacher	Baluch?		

19	Behroz	It's like their native kind of dance	Same as above.	
20	Teacher	Like a Dervish?	Proposes connection with another ethnic group.	Proposes religious influences on cultural practice.
21	Behroz	Yeah, I mean the Darvish, the Sufis, they have their own special dance.	Acknowledges connection between cultural practices of different ethnic groups.	Acknowledges and recognizes religious influence on cultural practice.
22	Behroz	Kind of religious.	Recognizes connection between ethnic groups.	Same as above.
23	Behroz	They think when they are dancing they are worshipping God.	Explicitly states social significance of intertextual connection.	States social significance of connection between religious discourse and culture.
24	Behroz	I mean, it looks like this.	Same as above.	Same as above.
25	Teacher	But, it's a little bit different?		
26	Behroz/ Saeed	Yes.		
27	Saeed	It's interesting to watch.	Recognizes connection between text (photograph) and previous experiences in Iran.	
28	Teacher	So, what is it called?	Proposing a connection between dance and specific linguistic name.	
29	Teacher	What are they doing?	Same as above.	
30	Teacher	How many are there?		
31	Behroz	In the picture?		
32	Teacher	I mean, normally?		
33	Teacher	Will the whole village go out and do that?	Proposing connection of text 'Social Whirl' with dances in rural Iran.	
34	Saeed	Not too crowded.	Acknowledges connection of text (photograph) with dances in rural Iran.	
35	Saeed	But, for example, in	States social	Proposes connection

		my village when there's a wedding or something, a big group of people dancing with each other.	significance of juxtaposed texts. Dances similar to the one depicted in the photograph are important in rural Iran.	between religious institution (wedding) with cultural practice (dancing).
36	Saeed	Turning around, shaking a flag or something…	Same as above.	
37	Saeed	handkerchief.	Same as above.	
38	Behroz	They do lots with their feet.	Acknowledges connection of texts in omniscient way.	
39	Teacher	Like step dancing?		
40	Behroz	No, they're not step dancers.		
41	Behroz	But, they have lots of moves with their feet.	Same as above.	
42	Teacher	Can you do this type of dance, Merat?		
43	Merat	I can do it.		
44	Teacher	Are you a good dancer?		
45	Merat	No.		
46	Saeed	Sometimes they a bigger group than this.	Elaboration on meaning of texts.	
47	Teacher	What does it symbolize?	Proposes connection between text (photographic depiction of cultural dance) with other symbolic texts.	
48	Teacher	Does it symbolize anything?	Same as above.	
49	Behroz	When I look at this kind of dance, I relate it to tribal.	Acknowledges juxtaposition of texts, that is the dance with cultural/ethnic texts, but at a social distance.	Discourse of Western exotic view of East juxtaposed with Iranian discourse of city dweller/rural divide.
50	Behroz	Because not too many people do it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
51	Behroz	It's a special kind of dance.	Recognizes juxtaposition of photograph of	Same as above.

			ethnic/tribal dance with text that denotes 'special' meaning.	
52	Teacher	It's kind of a tribe?		
53	Behroz	Yes, it's Baluch that do this kind of dance.	States social significance of dance to particular ethnic tribe, but distances himself from texts.	Same as above.

Figure 5: "The Social Whirl." (2002, June) National Geographic, p. 142.

At the start of the excerpt, the 'teacher' proposes a connection between the National Geographic photograph with similar texts from Iran (02-03). Parviz acknowledges the connection (04, 06, 09-10, 12). Behroz also recognizes the connection and states the social significance of the connection, while at the same time he distances himself from the text, which I will discuss more about later.

In lines 14-18, the participants negotiate about who in Iran represents what is being depicted in the photograph. It is decided that the 'Baluch,' an ethnic group in Iran, best represents what is depicted in the photograph. The 'teacher' proposes a connection with another ethnic group when he asks "Like a Dervish?" (20). Behroz then acknowledges similarities between the dances the Darvish (correcting the teacher's pronunciation) or the Sufis engage in and the dance being depicted in the photograph. Yet, he also makes it clear that there are differences in that dances conducted by the Darvish are more connected with religious texts and religious discourse. For instance, he states: "They think when they are dancing they are worshipping God" (23). Nonetheless, he recognizes the connection between dances of the Darvish and the dance of the Baluch in that they look similar: "I mean, it looks like this" (24).

Then the teacher proposes that the dance has connections to other texts (28-30 & 32-33). Saeed acknowledges that connection and states social significance of the text (dance depicted in the photograph, which has been constructed to signify a dance by the Baluch tribe), when he states, "But, for example, in my village when there's a wedding or something, a big group of people dancing with each other. Turning around, shaking a flag or something…" (36-37). Behroz also acknowledges the connection as he suggests, "They do lots with their feet" (38). The participants then construct what the dance looks like. The 'teacher' then proposes another connection between the photograph and unspecified symbolic texts when he asks: "What does it symbolize?" (47). Behroz acknowledges a connection when he connects the dance to a tribal practice and at the same time distances himself from the text (photograph).

In line 13, Behroz is suggesting that not many people in Iran engage in this type of activity, which I have stated is an attempt to distance himself from the depiction in the National Geographic photograph. The picture, which actually takes place in southwestern Afghanistan near Iran, shows men in traditional garb engaging in a traditional dance. The photograph looks exotic. When Behroz states: "When I look at this kind of dance, I relate it to tribal" (line 49), he is distancing the behavior depicted in the photograph from himself. This is probably the case because he comes from a large city in Iran and not from a tribe in a rural area. He also seems to want to make it clear that this is not a typical Iranian pattern as he reiterates, "Because not too many people do it" (line 50). He also states that the "Baluch that do this kind of dance" (line 53), which by inference suggests that it doesn't relate to his social world.

Behroz seems engaged in a discourse that I am familiar with through conversations I have had with cultural informants about Iran, that has been alluded to earlier on, and that is the deep socio-economic divide between "sophisticated" city dwellers and those from "villages," who are often seen as unsophisticated and backwards by city dwellers. In fact, it is often considered a deep insult (amongst city dwellers) to say someone is from a 'village,' which is often interpreted to mean that the individual is 'lower class' and 'ignorant.' It is also related to discourses about socioeconomic class in that city dwellers are often considered a higher class than rural dwellers. Thus, Behroz attempts to distance himself from the National Geographic text; however, Saeed doesn't seem to.

While a similar scene similar to the one depicted in the photograph probably does not exist in cities in Iran, it is clear that similar scenes of dress and dance do exist

in rural Iran because Saeed acknowledges that it is part of the Iranian experience (lines 35-37) and that he has been part of this type of social activity: "…in my village when there's a wedding or something, a big group of people dancing with each other." Even though he grew up in a large city, he acknowledges his heritage from a village, and the fact that he has visited his ancestral village ("in my village"; line 35) and witnessed dances similar to the one depicted in the National Geographic photograph. Therefore, it appears he is resisting the discourse of city dweller superiority and acknowledging a connection with a rural past. Nonetheless, there does appear to be a further construction of a joint discourse during the excerpt that relates to a socio-economic divide in Iran, which in turn is connected, in part, to a rural/urban divide.

'Cinderella' in a Cross-Cultural Context

The last excerpt from the data to be analyzed in this chapter starts out again with a discussion of an article related to a genre of popular texts. Specifically, the article is about Cinderella type stories developed in Hollywood (Poniewozik, 2004). Once again, the participants begin discussing popular texts within a 'Western' context, and then they make connections to similar texts within an Iranian context. In addition, the interaction between the participants about these texts leads to a construction of discourse that relates once again to socio-economic class.

Table 14: Excerpt 12

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Intertextuality	Interdiscoursivity
01	Teacher	The last one I want to talk about is Cinderella.		

02	Teacher	"The Princess Paradox."		
03	Teacher	How would you describe that photograph?		
04	Teacher	And what does Cinderella symbolize to you?	Proposes a connection between Cinderella text and other unspecified symbolic texts.	
05	Teacher	Do you know the story about Cinderella?		
06	Behroz	Yes.		
07	Teacher	Do you know the story about Cinderella?		
08	Parviz	Yes.		
09	Teacher	What does it signify?	Same as above.	
10	Teacher	When you see the symbol Cinderella, what does it mean?	Same as above.	
11	Behroz	Realizing your dream.	Acknowledges connection of 'Cinderella' text and texts related to 'Realizing your dream'	
12	Teacher	Yeah, and what kind of life does Cinderella lead in the story?	Proposes connection between 'Cinderella' text and texts related to socio-economic class.	
13	Behroz	I mean, she was a poor like…	Acknowledges connection between 'Cinderella' text and texts related to socio-economic class.	
14	Teacher	Poor, abused…		
15	Behroz	Yeah.	Recognizes connection between 'Cinderella' text and texts related to socio-economic class.	
16	Teacher	Young girl who was worked by her stepsisters who were abusing her and	States social significance of the juxtaposed texts (Cinderella and texts	

		made her do all the work.	related to class and class related oppression).	
17	Teacher	Right?		
18	Behroz	That's right.	Confirms the social significance.	
19	Teacher	Cleaned the house, while they got themselves all dressed up to go to the balls and dances.	Same as above.	
20	Teacher	So, it's like a class story, isn't it?	Proposes connection between Cinderella and socio-economic class texts (stories).	Proposing a connection between discourse that relates to popular tales (rags to riches stories) and socio-economic class discourse.
21	Behroz	Yes.	Recognizes the connection between Cinderella and socio-economic class texts.	Acknowledges a connection between discourse that relates to popular tales (rags to riches stories) and socio-economic discourse.
22	Teacher	Then what happens to Cinderella?		
23	Teacher	She meets the…what?		
24	Teacher	The Prince?	Same as above.	
25	Behroz	Yes.	Same as above.	
26	Parviz	The Prince gave her some shoes.	Same as above.	
27	Teacher	She was wearing a shoe and of course she lost it.		
28	Parviz	She lost one.		
29	Teacher	Why do you think the Cinderella story and stories like Cinderella are so popular for so many years?	Proposes a connection between Cinderella text and other popular texts that fit a similar genre.	Proposes a connection between discourse related to popular tales that depicts rags to riches success and socio-economic discourse.
30	Behroz	Kind of sense of hope.	Acknowledges a connection between Cinderella text and	Acknowledges a connection between discourse related to

			other popular texts that represent a similar genre.	popular tales that depicts rags to riches success and socio-economic discourse.
31	Teacher	Sense of hope?		
32	Teacher	Very good.	Recognizes connection of Cinderella text and other popular texts that fit a similar genre.	Recognizes connection between discourse related to popular tales that depicts rags to riches success and socio-economic discourse.
33	Teacher	A sense of justice?	Suggests social significance between 'Cinderella' text and popular texts that fit genre.	States social significance of the interdiscoursivity of discourses stated above.
34	Teacher	Social justice in a way?	Same as above.	Same as above.
35	Teacher	What does it mean to little girls?		
36	Teacher	The Cinderella story is very popular, particularly for little girls, right?		
37	Teacher	Is it like a fantasy?	Proposes connection between Cinderella text and texts related to fantasy.	
38	Behroz	It is.	Acknowledges connection between Cinderella text and texts related to fantasy.	
39	Teacher	Let me ask you a question.		
40	Teacher	In Iran, are there any stories like that in the Iranian popular culture?	Proposes a connection between 'Cinderella' text and popular texts in Iran.	Proposes a connection between 'rags to riches' discourse in Western popular texts and 'rags to riches' discourse in Iranian popular texts.
41	Teacher	Like the Cinderella story? (Long pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
42	Teacher	No?		
43	Parviz	Yes. (Talks to Behroz in Farsi)	Acknowledges connection between	Acknowledges a connection between

			'Cinderella' text and popular texts in Iran.	'rags to riches' discourse in Western popular texts and 'rags to riches' discourse in Iranian popular texts.
44	Behroz	Which one?		
45	Parviz	(Talks to Behroz in Farsi)	Negotiates meaning of proposed intertextual connection.	
46	Behroz	Yes, there is some kind of like this kind of story.	Recognizes connection between 'Cinderella' text and popular texts in Iran.	Recognizes a connection between 'rags to riches' discourse in Western popular texts and 'rags to riches' discourse in Iranian popular texts.
47	Behroz	It's like…I don't remember it exactly.		
48	Behroz	But, it involved a bird like sitting randomly on the shoulder of a person and the person becomes a King.	Same as above.	Same as above.
49	Teacher	Okay, so there is this fantasy…		Same as above.
50	Behroz	Yes.	Same as above.	Same as above.
51	Teacher	About someone becoming a Noble.	Same as above.	Same as above.
52	Teacher	Are there any…in Iranian culture…class divisions?	States social significance of juxtaposed popular texts	States social significance of the interconnection of popular Iranian and Western discourses that relate to the amelioration of class divisions.
53	Behroz	Yeah, there is.	Confirms social significance of juxtaposed texts	Confirms social significance of the interconnection of Iranian and Western discourses that relate to the amelioration of class divisions.
54	Behroz	A huge gap.	Same as above.	Same as above.

At the start of the 'Cinderella' excerpt, the 'teacher' proposes a connection between the text 'Cinderella,' and other popular texts with similar symbolism that the participants might be familiar with. Behroz appears to acknowledge a connection when he responds: "Realizing your dream" (11) to the question, "When you see the symbol Cinderella, what does it mean?" (10). However, this connection is not taken up by the participants, so an intertextual connection cannot be claimed.

However, the teacher proposes a connection between the text 'Cinderella' and texts related to socio-economic class when he asks: "…what kind of life does Cinderella lead in the story?" (12). Behroz acknowledges the proposed connection when he responds, "I mean, she was a poor like" (13). Although he doesn't offer a complete sentence for a response, it is clear that he is associating the 'Cinderella' text with socio-economic class. Behroz acknowledges then recognizes the connection (15). Then Behroz and the teacher jointly attach social significance to the meaning of the intertextual construction (16-19).

The teacher then proposes a broader discursive connection between discourses that relate to popular tales (rags to riches stories) and socio-economic class (20). Behroz acknowledges the interdiscursive connection. However, it isn't taken up immediately, and the 'teacher' appears to propose the same connection between discourses, that is discourses related to popular tales that depict rags to riches 'success' and socio-economic class (29). Behroz acknowledges the proposed connection when he responds: "Kind of sense of hope" (30). The connection is recognized (32), and then the teacher states social significance when he asks, "A sense of justice?" (33). In short, the teacher

attaches social significance to the interdiscursive connection. At the same time, it appears the participants construct an intertextual connection between Cinderella text(s) and other texts that represent a similar genre that depicts class justice. There appears to be a general understanding of the meaning being developed at the discursive level. The meaning that was apparently constructed by the participants was that there is a discourse in the 'Cinderella'-type genre that connects to a broader socio-economic discourse, which relates to socio-economic class separation and disparity.

In line 40, the teacher proposes a connection at the textual level, when he asks, "In Iran, are there any stories like that in the Iranian popular culture?" Specifically, he proposes a connection between 'Cinderella'-type stories and popular texts in Iran. Parviz acknowledges a connection between 'Cinderella' and popular texts in Iran (43), although it is necessary to negotiate meaning with Behroz in Farsi. After the negotiation, Behroz recognizes a connection between 'Cinderella' and popular texts in Iran as he states: "Yes, there is some kind of like this kind of story" (46), which is recognition of a similar genre in Iran. Then Behroz gives an interpretation of the genre from Iran (48). At the same time, there is a proposed interdiscursive connection between a 'rags to riches' discourse in Western popular texts and a similar 'rags to riches' discourse in Iranian popular texts (40). This interdiscursive connection is acknowledged by Parviz (43), and recognized by Behroz (46).

At the end of the excerpt, the 'teacher' and Behroz appear to jointly construct and attach social significance to the discourse. Specifically, the teacher asks: "Are there any…in Iranian culture…class divisions?" (52). Behroz responds, "Yeah, there is, a huge gap" (53-54). Thus, they appear to be constructing a joint discourse that suggests

that there is social significance to the interconnection of popular Iranian and Western discourses that relate to the amelioration of class divisions (52-53). That is, the participants recognize and attach social significance to similar discourses found in both Iran and the West that are connected to genres of popular texts that suggest that it is possible to overcome poverty and join the rich, even though there is a "huge gap" (54). This suggests, "Realizing your dream" (11) and gives, "Kind of sense of hope" (30).

Conclusions

In sum, there were many meanings that were constructed through negotiation in the excerpts in this chapter. Discourses were in turn jointly constructed during the negotiations over meanings of various texts. Some of the most apparent joint discourses that were constructed during the interactions related to gender, socio-economic class, family, religion, history, politics, law, and economics. The discourses most often were related to an Iranian context; however, often the interaction developed initially from conversations related to North American popular texts. In other words, North American popular texts often served as springboards to conversations about texts and discourses in Iran that related to the participants socio-cultural worlds. That is, while the discussions often began with a text from 'American' popular culture, the participants would most often make connections to related texts from an Iranian context, which helped to center the participants in the discussion. This appeared to facilitate conversation by providing sociocultural context for the participants. For example, when discussing 'Cinderella'-type narratives developed in Hollywood (Poniewozik, 2004), connections were made to similar texts in Iran, which in turn were connected to institutional discourses in Iran.

'Teacher' often facilitated these transitions, which often had the effect of centering the other participants in the conversation. This finding will be the focus of the next chapter.

In the first excerpt in this chapter that focused on 'names' in Iran, there were negotiations about the meaning of the names (texts). Connections between names (texts) and various discourses were constructed through interaction. For instance, the 'teacher' learned that many names are connected to religious texts. There was also negotiation about what the text 'traditional' means. It was constructed by the group to mean 'conservative,' 'religious,' and sometimes 'old.' The process of connecting texts such as names to various discourses represented, I would argue, 'learning moments' for the participants, including the 'teacher,' in that it provided practice developing meaningful discourse in the target language. Through negotiation, what became part of the joint discourse was that names of people in Iran represent significant sociocultural meaning, and they were connected to discourses related to religion, gender, family background, history, politics, and socio-economic class, and these negotiations provided learning moments for the participants.

The excerpt about what constitutes 'art,' which began with a famous work of popular art as a 'springboard text', then changed to the participants' concepts of what constitutes art, and then ultimately changed to an interaction about labor discourse and gender, provided another example of a joint construction of discourse. Specifically, conversation developed about women and girls working in harsh conditions in the Persian carpet industry. What is notable is that the conversation began as a reaction to 'North American' popular art texts. The discourse also comprises discussion about conditions related to poor, rural villages. I would argue that this represents learning

through discussion and negotiation and construction of a discourse related to critical social justice issues such as class and gender. Thus, the participants were able to contribute to the construction of discourse that was meaningful.

A joint discourse about gender constructed by the participants developed further during interaction that followed a reading about a North American popular text, a movie review related to gender (Ebert, 2004). The discourse in the excerpt was more explicitly related to gender oppression in Iran. The participants constructed a discourse about gender that was juxtaposed with political, economic, class, generational, legal, and religious discourses. In short, a discourse was jointly constructed by the participants that related to gender oppression across many domains within Iranian society. Texts that had been brought up in discussion at different times during the eight-week course were brought up again, such as 'traditional people,' although in this specific context the meaning of 'traditional' appeared to be broadened to include 'old people.' In addition, texts related to religion and the rural/urban divide also appeared in the discussion. Yet, the meanings that were negotiated related primarily to the interconnection of gender and legal texts, which were connected to a joint discourse constructed by the participants that related to gender oppression in Iran. Thus, the excerpt offers further evidence of joint development of discourse that is about women who are oppressed and disenfranchised by legal and political texts. This also presents evidence of learning in that it represents discursive practice of meaningful, critical discourse on the part of the participants. In other words, the process of engaging in meaningful discourse is crucial for language development (Diaz-Rico, pp. 183-188, 2004).

The excerpt related to a conversation about a National Geographic photograph ('Social Whirl,' 2002, June, p. 142) also showed the participants sharing texts, and in the process developing similar discourse(s) constructed elsewhere—specifically, discourses related to socio-economic class, tribal/family customs, and the rural/urban divide, which cannot be clearly delineated from socio-economic class discourse. These discourses, also constructed elsewhere in the data, were further developed through interaction by the group. Thus, meanings were negotiated and discourse(s) were constructed jointly that related to other excerpts from the data. As Thibault pointed out, "...textual meanings are made, remade, imposed, contested, and changed from one textual production or social occasion of discourse to another" (1991, p. 6). The negotiation of meanings of signs and texts indeed provided opportunities to look at ideology, power and mythologies, which also provided a means to ascertain values and beliefs of the group (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, pp. 9-14). That is, through negotiation of meanings of texts that occurred through social interaction, new texts were developed or constructed (Smagorinsky, 2001). Thus, the use of both popular and other cultural texts provided the participants opportunities to (re)interpret and (re)negotiate meaning.

The last excerpt in this chapter focused on discourses related to Iran that began, once again, with a North American popular text, an article about 'Cinderella' stories from Hollywood (Ponjewozik, 2004). Once again, a joint discourse about socio-economic class, and class divisions, particularly in Iran, is developed. There are intertextual connections made between tales (stories) related to class divisions in the West and similar stories in Iran. Thus, there was further development of a joint

discourse, as found elsewhere in the data, about socio-economic class, and class divisions.

The data in this chapter appears to show that as the participants shared texts and discourses, meanings were negotiated and discourses were jointly constructed over the eight-week period of the course. Learning moments were looked at primarily from the discursive level. What is significant is how discourses were jointly developed and meanings were shared by the participants. In sum, there were interdiscursive connections that the participants made between political, economic, class, generational, legal and religious discourses. The participants also jointly constructed a discourse about class divisions in 'Iranian society.'

The participants seemed to indicate, through papers written during the class, their journal, and a personal interview, that there were 'learning moments' during the course at the discursive level. For instance, in a reflection paper for the class where the assignment was to reflect on how reading, writing, and discussing about popular texts influenced learning, Behroz wrote about what his experiences were like before the class: "I did not even know what a good topic for conversation was and even if they tried to give me some hints I did not have enough knowledge to continue the conversation." He also added this about his experience interacting with North Americans before the class:

> Secondly not having enough knowledge about the subject of interests I have always preferred to refrain from engaging in conversations since it always make a fool out of me commenting on matters which I know a little about. So it was

like an eternal loop which I could not rid of: Not having enough knowledge about the matter of interests which mainly evolved around the popular culture thwarting me from engaging in such conversations and lack of such conversations did not help me acquire those much needed knowledge (Behroz, 2004).

Thus, what Behroz shared in the writing assignment indicates that before going through the experience of sharing cultural texts and discourses during the 'class,' and before having 'learning moments' through the process of negotiating meanings of various discourses, he had a difficult time knowing "a good topic for conversation" and had a difficult time "engaging in such conversations."

In the same written assignment, Behroz also shared how the sharing of cultural texts and discourses helped facilitate the development or construction of other discourses:

But in this method we had the opportunity to select the topics of our interests which made all the subsequent conversation more plausible. It also allowed every body to participate in discussions since the topics were such that either we had prior exposure to them is some point of time or if not, every body were encouraged to participate by sharing his own perspective on the issue or talking about his own country's tradition regarding that issue (Behroz, 2004).

The key point here is that the participants were given the 'opportunity' to engage in discussions that they had had 'prior exposure to,' which provided context allowing entry into the conversation, which in turn allowed opportunity for discursive practice. And, discursive practice is essential for language development (Diaz-Rico, pp. 183-188, 2004).

In the same written assignment, Parviz also pointed out how the sharing of cultural texts and discourses during the 'class' created learning moments that helped him to become aware of other popular texts and discourses, which provided further opportunities to enter in conversations in the community: "I know some conversations are different for them than other conversations. For example when they talk about sport or their favorite team I know they are serious about it before I didn't know that some small thing are so important I couldn't realize them before."

In personal interviews at the end of the eight weeks, Behroz shared what it was like before the class: "I didn't have enough knowledge to pursue and follow the conversation." And again, "You don't know what's on other people's minds. They get bored and sometimes you make a fool out of yourself. You are commenting on something you don't know." My interpretation of these comments is that before the class he didn't have enough experience sharing texts and discourses with speakers of English, and therefore had difficulty interacting with them. The format of the class allowed many opportunities to share cultural texts and discourses and in the process of negotiating meaning and constructing discourses with the group, discursive experience and practice occurred, which can be transferred to future interactions with English speakers. As stated earlier, the literature suggests that discursive practice is essential for

language development (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Kehe & Kehe, 1998) Behroz also suggested that the sharing of cultural texts and discourses allowed for learning that was deeply meaningful. When asked about his view points concerning popular texts and signs embedded in such texts, he responded in the following way:

> I mean it helped to gain some background to understand it, sometimes, I mean when I look at something I get a first impression and I mean occasionally more than often it's not what I think there a much deeper meaning so in some sense it helped me to try to think deeply and relate the symbols and signs to the context you know like almost everything not like discrete piece of information it helped me to connect the dots and then get the overall big picture (Behroz, 2004).

This response indicates that Behroz felt that through the sharing of cultural texts learning moments had occurred, and that in the process of thinking 'deeply,' or critically, about the texts, it led to the understanding of the 'big picture,' or large institutional discourses.

In another personal interview, Parviz shared similar thoughts about the importance of sharing popular texts and discourses. He stated that: "because in this class we talked about everything, we have a big subject, and you know we didn't have a limit to talk we talked about everything, what's going on around, what's going on in the newspaper, what's going on T.V., what's going on in that movie—it helped me a lot to understand and to speak better." My interpretation of Parviz's thoughts about the sharing of texts is that it enabled the participants access to discourses through the

process of negotiation, which in turn provided opportunities for learning, and that these learning moments occurred over the eight weeks as the participants jointly developed discourses through negotiation. As Parviz pointed out: "The first day, the first class my first, second, and third class, I didn't understand anything in your class because it was very different for me and after that, you know slowly, slowly, at the end of class I understand everything you say."

Parviz also added this during the personal interview at the end of the class:

> You know, I think this class really helped me to, you know, to communicate, really helped me, and actually, especially, about the sports and movies you know because when Americans talk about some shows, some sports, you know before that I didn't understand, right now I understand something, have a communicate with them, conversation with them because I know something about that, and make me attention more, you know, I like to see them turn on the T.V. when I see the Red Sox, I know what's going on. (Parviz, 2004)

Parviz explicitly mentioned how important it was to him to gain access to popular texts and discourses. He also seemed to indicate that gaining access to popular texts and discourses facilitated other opportunities to further develop and construct these discourses with other English speaking conversants, which provided more opportunities for discursive practice. It should be noted that Parviz, who was the most recent immigrant from Iran, arriving only a couple of months before the start of the class, had virtually no ability to speak English at the beginning of the eight-week class.

By the end of the eight-week class, he was having conversations with English speakers in various venues.

Finally, Saeed added in his personal interview with the researcher the following about the importance of looking at texts (signs) embedded within larger texts for meaning: "I mean the words just have its meaning, but the sign has a thousand meanings behind it, and when you think about some sign, I mean then you think about some word, it has one meaning, or maybe several meanings, but if you give attention to some sign, it has a story behind." For him, learning moments came through the negotiation of meaning of texts and the connection to other texts.

It should be noted that these interviews came at the very end of the class, and the participants were instructed to be as honest about their viewpoints as possible. Nonetheless, one could argue that the participants were just trying to please the teacher/researcher, and these responses cannot be trusted. I believe that the responses of the participants were honest, because the participants were honest with me throughout the study. However, if one doesn't trust the responses of the participants, one could look at the data and see evidence of learning.

Specifically, throughout the course there is evidence that through the sharing of cultural texts and discourses between the participants and the 'teacher' there were learning moments through the process of discursive practice. Meaning was negotiated between the participants and discourses were constructed that appeared and reappeared throughout the eight-week period of the course. The discourse that was jointly constructed by the participants appear time and again in the data, and in this chapter I have given several examples of the discourse(s) that were jointly constructed and

developed. It was the process of negotiation, and the dialogue that the participants were able to engage in because they were able to share familiar texts and discourses, that provided space for language learning (Young, Miller, 2004). This 'cultural sharing' that impacted participation structure is explored extensively in chapter six.

Finally, at the beginning of the study, I asked this question: How and to what extent do participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs? I suggest that the findings indicate that the participants did construct discourse, to a significant extent, that were both meaningful and critical. For example, after reading popular texts that related to class and gender in 'North American' contexts, the participants were able to critically reflect, and then make connections to similar texts from their previous sociocultural community in Iran. Then, they went through a process of (re)interpreting and negotiating meanings of texts from their previous sociocultural communities, made intertextual connections with new texts, and jointly constructed meaning(s) through interaction with a cultural outsider. This process indicates critical reading and thinking.

Thus, the excerpts appear to show the participants drew upon texts and discourses from their sociocultural or discourse communities (Gee, 1996), and then constructed new texts with a cultural outsider through interaction. This finding supports notions related to sociocultural theory. The findings also indicate that the focus on signs (social semiotics) developed interactions, interpretations, and critical reflection.

CHAPTER 6

IDENTITY AND CHANGES IN PARTICIPATION STRUCTURE

In this chapter, the analysis is on how participation structure changed over the eight-week period of the course. Specifically, I look at the data to determine if the participation structure changed over time. This is important because if the participation structure became more 'learner-centered,' that is, if the participants were able to engage in conversations as 'knowledgeable authorities,' then they would have opportunities to develop language and communicative abilities (Young & Miller, 2004 & Diaz-Rico, 2004). I also look at the data to determine if there were changes in participation structure(s), and if so, how did it change, and why did it change? I take the position that participation is essential for language and literacy development. As Young and Miller (2004) put it: "…learning does not only involve the individual acquiring propositional knowledge; more significantly, it involves all participants in a discursive practice changing their patterns of social co-participation" (p. 521). Thus, the focus and purpose of this chapter is to address the following research question: In what ways do the conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings impact learning?

The data that will be used in the analysis will be from transcripts of class interactions. Thus, the focus of the analysis will be on the language of the participants; specifically, I will analyze the class interactions (language), and observe how the participation structure changed over time, using identity as a construct, as described in chapter two, the literature review. In the process of looking at the dynamics of

participation structure(s), I determine identity(ies). I look at who claims knowledge in various contexts because knowledge and identity are closely connected. In other words, knowledge can connect to authority, particularly in educational settings, and this can, in turn, connect to 'identity building.' Therefore, attention will be given in the analysis of who claims knowledge, and how this might influence 'identity building' (Bloome, et al., 2005, p. 194).

Finally, in my analysis, I'm conceptually aware that there are powerful discourses related to race, religion, gender, and socio-economic class that are often complicit in the construction of identities of individuals. In fact, in the data analyzed so far it has become obvious how ubiquitous discourses related to gender, religion and class have been in the socio-cultural lives of my participants, and there is little doubt that these discourses have influenced the identities of the participants in this study. Yet, individuals can and do resist and contest identities, and they are capable of altering or changing identities and constructing new ones through dynamic, socially constructed, processes.

In the summary and commentary that I give in this chapter, I look at identity constructions and I offer interpretations about participation. For the sake of clarity, I consider 'teacher' to be an identity in this chapter as opposed to a proper noun; therefore, I use lower case. 'Teacher' refers to the person who 'headed' the class (who is also the researcher and author of the study); thus, 'Teacher' is treated as a name or proper noun and is capitalized.

For the first excerpt from the data that will be analyzed in this chapter, the participants were asked to read a short article entitled "Baseball takes a hit" (Corliss,

2004), which dealt with steroid use in baseball. There were preliminary comprehension activities before engaging in an open discussion about the article. Then the 'teacher' began an open discussion about the article, with a portion shown in the subsequent table. As the data will show, the participants' participation was minimal, which will be discussed fully afterwards.

Table 15: Excerpt 13

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Identities Indicated in Message Unit	Commentary about Participation
01	Teacher	Okay, this is the last one I'm going to talk about, baseball.	Teacher positions himself as authority, as 'teacher.'	
02	Teacher	We talked a lot about baseball last time.	Teacher gives authority to author of written text.	
03	Teacher	This is a conversation that a lot of Americans are talking about because it doesn't just relate to baseball	'Teacher' positions himself as 'cultural' authority. Claims knowledge about 'American' discourse.	It appears that the 'teacher' is 'giving' background information about popular discourse.
04	Teacher	It relates to a lot of different issues.	Claims knowledge and insight of text. Constructs identity of 'authority' and 'teacher.'	Same as above.
05	Teacher	Including sports in general	Same as above.	Same as above.
06	Teacher	And also the Olympics.	Same as above.	Same as above.
07	Teacher	It says here that 'Baseball takes a hit'	Same as above.	
08	Teacher	First of all, before we get to the article	'Teacher' positions himself as the 'authority' and 'teacher'	

			of the group.	
09	Teacher	Remember we talked about this?	Teacher is attempting to position the participants as 'knowledgeable' by referring to previous texts about baseball they read and discussed in a previous class.	It appears that the 'teacher' is attempting to give context to the text by making intertextual connections to facilitate participation.
10	Teacher	Parviz? (There is a pause with no response)	Teacher retains authority as 'teacher' by controlling turn-taking.	The 'teacher' is explicitly calling on participant to participate without response. Parviz is unable or unwilling to participate because of a lack of knowledge of text.
11	Teacher	And Saeed? (There is a pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
12	Teacher	What are they doing here? (Pause)	'Teacher' continues to position himself as the authority/teacher by direct questioning. Teacher takes on caretaking role.	The 'teacher' is explicitly calling for participation through direct questioning without success.
13	Teacher	What is this guy doing? (Pause)		No response from participants to teacher's direct questioning.
14	Teacher	What's he doing? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
15	Parviz	He wants to bat the ball.	Parviz positions himself as student by responding to 'teacher's' questions.	Parviz responds with short answer.
16	Teacher	He's hitting the ball while swinging a bat.	Teacher signals authority and further constructs or 'builds' identity as teacher/authority by correcting and developing response.	Teacher is rephrasing. That is, he is participating as an evaluator.
17	Teacher	Remember, we talked about that.	'Teacher' positions himself as knowledgeable authority about previous discourse.	The teacher is trying to facilitate participation by trying to connect text with previous texts.
18	Teacher	And uh…		
19	Teacher	What's this guy	'Teacher' positions	Teacher tries another

		doing here?	himself as authority by direct questioning.	direct question to increase participation.
20	Behroz	He's a peecher (pitcher)	Behroz is positioned as 'student' by responding to the 'teacher's' questioning.	Behroz responds with a short answer.
21	Teacher	He's a pitcher	Teacher signals authority as 'teacher' by correcting Behroz's English pronunciation as native English 'model.'	
22	Teacher	And here's the famous symbol	'Teacher' claims knowledge about sign/text from previous discussion.	Teacher is connecting to previous text to contextualize current discussion to facilitate participation.
23	Teacher	The sign that you were talking about.	Same as above.	Same as above.
24	Saeed	Yeah. (Laughs)		Saeed recognizes connection the teacher is making, but gives a very short response.
25	Teacher	You were talking about this famous sign.	'Teacher' positions himself as knowledgeable about previous text.	Teacher attempts again to make connections to previous text to facilitate participation, but no response from participants.
26	Teacher	Which is…(Pause)	'Teacher' positions himself as authority/teacher by direct questioning of 'students.'	
27	Teacher	This symbolizes what? (Pause)	Same as above.	Teacher asks direct questions to participants to increase participation.
28	Teacher	This sign right here?	Same as above.	Same as above.
29	Saeed	Yankees.	Saeed positions himself as student by responding to 'teacher's question.	Saeed's level of participation is limited to a one word response, although the type of question may have produced the one-word response.
30	Teacher	New York	'Teacher' positions	

		Yankees	himself as authority/teacher by confirming 'correct' response.	
31	Teacher	Right.	Same as above.	
32	Teacher	Very famous baseball team in the United States.	'Teacher' claims knowledge and 'cultural' authority.	The teacher is providing some background information.
33	Teacher	Also, where else in the world is baseball popular?	'Teacher' positions himself as teacher/authority by direct questioning and by redirecting topic to baseball in a global context.	The teacher is again requesting participation by the participants through direct questioning.
34	Saeed	I think Japan.	Saeed positions himself as 'student' by responding to question.	Saeed gives limited response, probably due to lack of background knowledge about baseball in a global context.
35	Teacher	Very much so.	'Teacher' positions himself as authority/teacher by acknowledging 'correctness' or Saeed's response.	
36	Teacher	In Japan it's big.	'Teacher' claims knowledge, or cultural expertise about Japan.	The teacher gives background information to participants. The participants' level of participation is limited to listening to teacher.
37	Teacher	In Tokyo, the team is called the Tokyo Giants.	Same as above.	Same as above.
38	Teacher	When I lived in Japan…	Solidifies knowledge claims and cultural expertise of Japan with group by sharing that he lived in Japan.	Same as above.
39	Teacher	When I lived in Hiroshima, Japan…	Same as above.	Same as above.
40	Teacher	I saw the	Same as above.	Same as above.

		baseball team called the Hiroshima Carp.		
41	Saeed	Carp?	Saeed positions himself as 'student' by asking genuine question about Japanese baseball.	Saeed asks question related to the lexical level.
42	Teacher	Carp.	'Teacher' positions himself as knowledgeable expert.	The teacher responds to the question.
43	Teacher	You know the fish?	'Teacher' continues to position himself as language teacher through questioning.	Same as above.
44	Saeed	Oh, yeah.	Saeed positions himself as student/learner by responding to teacher's question.	Saeed gives limited response.
45	Teacher	Why do you think they would call a baseball team the Carp?	'Teacher' positions himself as a knowledgeable 'cultural' authority.	The teacher asks question to initiate participation.
46	Teacher	Does anybody know? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
47	Behroz	Is this a usual name?	Behroz positions himself as student/learner.	Behroz responds with a question.
48	Behroz	Why do they call it?	Same as above.	Same as above.
49	Teacher	Because Carp symbolizes something strong and masculine.	'Teacher' positions himself as a knowledgeable 'cultural' authority.	The teacher responds with more background information related to Japanese 'culture.'

The preceding excerpt from the data, which was collected during the first week of the 'class,' seems to indicate that Teacher dominated the conversation with minimal participation on the part of the participants. The conversation does not address the focus of the text "Baseball takes a hit" (Corliss, 2004), which was about steroid use in

baseball, although the teacher does seem to indirectly address the topic briefly (03-07). At the beginning of the excerpt, Teacher appears to establish himself as the 'authority,' as he begins to build an identity as 'teacher' (01-02). He also appears to build an identity as a 'cultural authority,' as he claims knowledge about baseball discourse, which can also be interpreted as part of 'American' popular discourse. In short, the teacher claims knowledge and insight about the text, as he builds an identity as an 'authority' in relation to 'American' popular texts (04-10). Teacher builds his identity and position in the group as the 'authority' and the 'teacher' by engaging in direct questioning of the other participants for the purpose of getting them to respond (09-14). Parviz positions himself as a 'student' by responding to the teacher's question (15). Subsequently, the 'teacher' continues to develop the construction of 'teacher' or 'authority' as an identity for himself by correcting and revising Parviz's response (16). The 'teacher' continues to reinforce and build his position as 'teacher' and 'knowledgeable authority' vis-à-vis discourse related to baseball. Behroz is positioned as 'student' as he responds to the teacher's questions (20), and Teacher then signaled his 'authority' as 'teacher' by correcting Behroz's English pronunciation (21).

Next, the teacher claims knowledge about a previous conversation about a New York Yankee symbol on a cap, which Saeed confirms and acknowledges. Saeed then makes the connection and acknowledges both texts and responds to the teacher's question by stating "Yankees" (29). By responding to the teacher's questions, Saeed positions himself as 'student' (29), and the 'teacher' further builds his identity as the 'authority' by confirming the 'correct' response (30-31).

In line 33, Teacher continues to construct an identity of 'authority' by questioning the participants with expectations of a 'correct' response, and, at the same time, he uses his authority to redirect the topic to baseball in a global context (33). Saeed, as 'student,' responds 'correctly' (34), and then Teacher as the 'authority' acknowledges the 'correctness' of Saeed's response (35).

Subsequently, Teacher expands his claims to knowledge and expertise to include Japan; specifically, knowledge about baseball in Japan (36-40). He attempts to construct an identity as a 'knowledgeable authority about Japan' with the group in part by sharing with them that he has spent time living in Japan. Saeed and Behroz appear to acknowledge the teacher as a 'knowledgeable authority about Japan' by asking the teacher questions about Japan (41 & 47-48), which Teacher responds to by sharing information about Japan. Thus, Teacher is positioned in the interaction as a knowledgeable 'cultural' authority about Japan.

The participation structure depicted in this excerpt is indicative of what occurs during the first two weeks of the course. The participation structure changes substantially as the course progresses, which the data will support later in this chapter. However, early in the course, when the discourse relates primarily to 'American' popular texts, and when there weren't intertextual connections made to familiar texts from the participants' sociocultural backgrounds, there is a noticeable lack of participation amongst the participants and Teacher dominates the conversation.

In the beginning of the excerpt, the 'teacher' attempts to contextualize the text by giving background information and connecting the text to a previous conversation (text), for the purpose of facilitating group participation. Yet, the participants generally

respond with very short responses or questions (20, 24, 29, 34, 41, 44, 47-48). There could be other factors or explanations for the minimal amount of participation in the beginning of the course. However, my interpretation is that when the conversation was solely about 'American' popular texts, and 'American' popular discourse, and no intertextual connections were made with the participants sociocultural backgrounds, the participants were inhibited.

First, it appears that the 'teacher' is positioned as the 'authority' with the knowledge about the texts being discussed (American popular texts). Consequently, the participants are positioned as 'students' who are not knowledgeable about the texts, and are without authority; thus, they are, in effect, silenced to a degree. This issue will be analyzed and discussed further in the next excerpt.

It should also be pointed out that another factor may have contributed to the lack of participation in the beginning. That is, a cultural informant that I consulted with stated to me that being a 'student' in Iran often means being silent in an educational setting. A 'teacher' is most often positioned as a strong authority and is almost always positioned as 'knowledgeable.' Yet, this is not the pattern that exists throughout the course as the data will show later on.

The subsequent excerpt is from data that was obtained through audiotape on June 28th, 2004, which was the beginning of the second week of the eight-week class. The excerpt is an example of what occurred early on in the course when the teacher focused almost exclusively on discussion related to North American popular texts. In this specific instance, the discussion related to older popular music genres. The

participants read some material related to the 'Blues,' including an article about the funeral of Ray Charles entitled "Charles gets rousing send-off" (Breznican, 2004), which not only discusses Ray Charles, but also other musical icons such as B.B. King and Stevie Wonder who had attended the funeral. Thus, the participants did have some background content before the discussion, although the participants were not familiar with the discourses, which proved to be a challenge.

Table 16: Excerpt 14

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Identities Indicated in Message Unit	Commentary about Participation
01	Teacher	But what about the blues?	'Teacher' positions himself as the 'authority' through direct questioning of the participants with an expectation of responses from the participants.	Here the 'teacher' is attempting to develop group participation through questioning.
02	Teacher	Where did it come from?	Same as above.	Same as above.
03	Teacher	And what community really started it? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
04	Teacher	Where was it developed? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
05	Teacher	The blues? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
06	Behroz	I guess it was African-American?	Behroz is positioned as 'student' by responding to Teacher's direct questioning.	Behroz engages in participation, although he is unsure and participates as 'student' by guessing at the right answer. His 'correct' guess was facilitated by a picture.
07	Teacher	Yeah, African-American.	The teacher 'builds' his identity as knowledgeable authority (teacher) by	The teacher confirms the 'right' answer, as the participation is structured

			claiming knowledge of popular music ('Blues' texts) and confirming 'correct' answer.	'traditionally.' (Teacher questions/student responds.
08	Teacher	They started it.	Same as above.	The teacher elaborates on the 'correct' answer. In doing so, he is participating in a traditional 'teacher-centered' structure, although this was not the intent.
09	Teacher	And it began in the South.	Same as above.	Same as above.
10	Teacher	A lot of times there were old songs.	Same as above.	Same as above.
11	Teacher	When you say the blues it means something sad.	Same as above.	Same as above.
12	Teacher	And a lot of times the lyrics, talked about lyrics.	Same as above.	Same as above.
13	Teacher	A lot of times the lyrics of the Blues songs were sad.	Same as above.	Same as above.
14	Teacher	You know, because of the African-American experience	'Teacher' continues to build his identity as knowledgeable authority by claiming knowledge about African-American history, which is claimed to be connected to popular texts (Blues music).	Same as above.
15	Teacher	Particularly the slavery period	Same as above.	'Teacher' continues to participate as the 'knowledge' center. Active vocal participation of other participants disappears, although there is listening.
16	Teacher	Jim Crow days	Same as above.	Same as above.
17	Teacher	There was a lot of sadness.	Same as above.	Same as above.

18	Teacher	And so a lot of the Blues came from that tradition.	Same as above.	Same as above.
19	Teacher	A lot of the lyrics were very sad.	Teacher positions himself and 'builds' identity as knowledgeable about popular music (Blues).	Same as above.
20	Teacher	But it has a very unique…(Mimics typical Blues chords)	Same as above.	Same as above.
21	Teacher	Later on, musicians like Eric Clapton…	Teacher expands his claim of knowledge about popular music to 'Western' musicians who adopted 'Blues' music; thus further building his identity as knowledgeable about popular music texts.	Same as above.
22	Teacher	Have you ever heard of Eric Clapton?	Same as above.	'Teacher' invites other participants to vocally participate in discussion.
23	Merat	No.	Merat is positioned as lacking knowledge.	Merat declines invitation to vocally participate in discussion because he positions himself as having no knowledge of the content of the topic.
24	Teacher	You've heard of the Rolling Stones?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' by engaging in authoritative questioning.	'Teacher' attempts again to invite other participants to vocally participate.
25	Teacher	Right?	Same as above.	Same as above.
26	Teacher	Have you heard of the Rolling Stones? (Pause)	Same as above.	Same as above.
27	Teacher	No? (Pause)		Same as above.
28	Teacher	Okay.		Teacher acknowledges that the participants are unable or unwilling to

				actively participate.
29	Behroz	Is that a song?	Behroz is positioned as 'student' who has little or no knowledge of topic.	Behroz attempts to participate in discussion by gaining background information.
30	Teacher	Rolling Stones?		'Teacher' responds to question.
31	Teacher	It's a rock band from England.	Teacher is positioned as knowledgeable authority about Western popular music.	'Teacher' gives background information related to topic.
32	Teacher	Well, anyway.		'Teacher' acknowledges that participants are having difficulty participating because of lack of background context.
33	Teacher	Have you heard of Led Zeppelin?	Teacher positioned as 'teacher' by questioning knowledge of 'students.'	'Teacher' attempts again to contextualize topic by mentioning another related 'text' to facilitate participation.
34	Behroz	No, I'm not that good…	Behroz is positioned as someone who has little or no knowledge in this context.	Behroz positions himself as not having knowledge of topic; thus, making participation difficult if not impossible.
35	Teacher	Okay, that's okay.		Teacher acknowledges that participants have little or no background knowledge of topic making participation difficult or impossible.
36	Teacher	Well, a lot of these bands…	'Teacher' positions himself again as knowledgeable about 'Western' popular music genres, and an 'authority' about the topic.	'Teacher' takes the position of knowledgeable 'authority;' thus, 'participation' becomes teacher-centered.

37	Teacher	These rock bands	Same as above.	Same as above.
38	Teacher	When I was young I listened to.	Same as above.	Same as above.
39	Teacher	But, a lot of them took from the Blues.	Same as above.	Same as above.
40	Teacher	They took some of the sounds from the Blues.	Same as above.	Same as above.
41	Teacher	So, it was very, very influential.	Same as above.	Same as above.
42	Teacher	And Americans really like the music.	Same as above.	Same as above.
43	Teacher	The rhythm and blues that Ray Charles was famous for.	Same as above.	Same as above.
44	Teacher	It was very, very popular.	Same as above.	Same as above.
45	Teacher	And that sound developed into other genres.	Same as above.	Same as above.
46	Teacher	What genres do you think developed later?	'Teacher' positioned as teacher by directing the questioning related to the topic.	Makes last attempt to invite participation related to topic.
47	Behroz	Jazz?	Behroz positioned as 'student' by giving response to the 'teacher.'	Behroz participates by responding to question with a question.
48	Teacher	Jazz kind of developed along with the Blues.	'Teacher' gives 'authoritative' answer to students; he claims knowledge of topic.	'Teacher' responds to question by giving more information.
49	Teacher	Later on Hip-Hop and so forth.	Same as above.	Same as above.
50	Teacher	Before we move on, do you have any questions about this that you weren't sure about?	"Teacher" is positioned as authority in the group by directing the agenda and positioning himself to give 'authoritative' answers to any 'student' question.	'Teacher' makes decision to move to another topic.
51	Teacher	Because the Blues and Jazz had a big impact on the American culture.	'Teacher' claims 'cultural' expertise and knowledge.	Informs other participants that the topic does have important relevance.

52	Teacher	Any other questions about that? (Period of silence)	Teacher positions himself to give 'authoritative' answers to any 'student' questions.	Final request for participation. Request met with silence.

In the following commentary about the preceding excerpt, I will first discuss identities that appeared to be indicated in the message units. Secondly, I will discuss the participation structures that appeared to develop, or not to develop. Finally, I will share some thoughts about what appeared to be a decided lack of participation amongst the participants and suggest possible reasons for it.

At the beginning of the excerpt, Teacher positions himself as the 'authority' by initiating a series of questions, which suggests a 'building of identity' in the group at that moment as the 'teacher' or the 'authority' (01-05). Behroz responds with a question, seeking approval for a 'correct' answer. In doing so, he is positioned as a 'student' (06). Teacher gives approval (07), and by doing so continues to build an identity within the group as a 'knowledgeable authority' about popular music in general, but specifically about the 'Blues' (08-21). The rest of the participants are silent; therefore, they are positioned as 'unknowledgeable students' at that particular moment.

Teacher then positions himself as the 'teacher' by requesting participation through questioning related to popular music (22, 24, 25, 26, & 27). Merat positions himself as 'non-participant' by replying, "No" (23). Behroz replies, "Is that a song?" (29), as a response to the question, "Have you heard of the Rolling Stones?" (26). Thus, Behroz is positioned as a 'student,' yet I interpret his response differently than Merat's response in that it appears to be an attempt to participate. Therefore, the 'teacher'

responds accordingly and shares with Behroz relevant information related to his question (30-31), as Teacher continues to 'build identity' as a 'knowledgeable authority' about Western popular music.

When Teacher asks a question about another rock group (33), in his attempt to make intertextual connections across musical genres and give context to the conversation, Behroz responds, "No, I'm not that good"(34); thus, Behroz is again positioned as being 'unknowledgeable'. Teacher appears to acknowledge that the other participants can barely participate because of a lack of background knowledge of North American popular music genres, so he attempts to provide the participants with some more background information related to the topic (36-45), and as he does this he continues to 'build' identity as a 'knowledgeable authority' on Western popular music genres within the group.

In line 46, Teacher attempts again to position himself not just as a 'knowledgeable authority,' but as a 'teacher' by questioning the participants for the purpose of facilitating discussion (46, 50, & 52). Behroz does respond with a one word response "Jazz" (47), and by doing so is positioned as 'student' by giving a response that was requested by the 'teacher.' However, Teacher responds not with more questions, but with some intertextual connections; therefore, he builds identity as 'knowledgeable.'

The participation structure for the participants, for the most part, does not develop as an educator might hope or expect. In the beginning of the excerpt, it appears that Teacher is attempting to involve the participants into the discussion through direct questioning (01-05). Behroz does respond by guessing at a 'correct' answer. Teacher

then confirms Behroz's response as 'correct,' which begins to construct a 'traditional' participation structure where the 'teacher' asks questions and the 'student' gives a response (06-07). Teacher then embarks on a mini-lecture (08-21), describing an African-American musical genre. The participation structure can be described as teacher-centered, where the other participants are silent listeners. Teacher does invite the other participants to participate through questioning (22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 33, 46, 50, & 52); however, for the most part, the participants decline to vocally participate because they appear not to have enough background content in order to make intertextual and interdiscursive connections, although they did read the article before the discussion (Breznican, 2004). The 'teacher' acknowledges that the participants are unable or unwilling to vocally participate because they are unable to make intertextual connections. Thus, Teacher takes the position of 'knowledgeable authority' and attempts to give the participants background information so that they may become active participants in the discussion (36-45). Nonetheless, the attempt to build group participation on the part of the 'teacher' in this excerpt ultimately does not develop.

The failure to develop a group participation structure in this particular excerpt is something that is apparent. I will explore the issue more extensively in the implications chapter. Briefly, what stands out is that Teacher does not appear to make any intertextual or interdiscursive connections to the participants' familiar socio-cultural worlds—namely, Iranian-related texts and discourses. The type of genre discussed could also be an issue because the popular music genres discussed were older. In other words, young North Americans might also be challenged by the lack of connections to their socio-cultural worlds as well. The same conclusions could be drawn about the

previous excerpt. In both cases, the focus of the discussion was exclusively on North American popular texts, with which the participants were unfamiliar, and they were unable to make intertextual and interdiscursive connections. This pattern occurred frequently during the first three or four classes. Fortunately, this pattern did not persist, as the participation structure began to change dramatically as the eight-week course progressed.

The next excerpt from the data was obtained through audiotape on July 5th, 2004, during the third week of the class. This excerpt is an example of how the participation structure had begun to change from early on because the topic of conversation was no longer exclusively related to 'Western' popular texts, although the conversation began after the group had viewed a short clip of a popular text (video) entitled "Harry Potter and the chamber of secrets" (Columbus, 2002). The conversation changed as the participants made intertextual connections to texts related to the participants' sociocultural worlds in Iran. As this occurred, the participation structure also began to change.

Table 17: Excerpt 15

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Identities Indicated in Message Unit	Commentary about Participation
01	Teacher	It is unusual and it's a fantasy.	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' and 'knowledgeable authority' about popular culture texts.	Teacher gives background information to participants to prepare for group participation.
02	Teacher	It's hard for you to get into this because it's hard	Teacher positions the participants as cultural outsiders with	Teacher acknowledges that the content of 'Harry Potter' is difficult

		for you to understand.	difficulties deciphering 'Western' popular cultural texts.	because the text is 'Western,' which might make participation difficult.
03	Teacher	Are there any stories like this from your own culture?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' who is giving 'students' opportunities to share.	Teacher attempts to make intertextual connections between 'Harry Potter' text and similar texts in the participants' socio-cultural worlds to facilitate understanding and participation.
04	Teacher	Iranian culture?	Same as above.	Same as above.
05	Teacher	That is kind of similar?	Same as above.	Same as above.
06	Behroz	Yeah, there is lot of fantasy.	Behroz is positioned by Teacher as authority on Iranian culture, and Behroz takes up this identity.	Behroz recognizes and acknowledges an intertextual connection(s), which allows him to respond and to start a conversation.
07	Behroz	I mean, with meaning like this.	Same as above.	Same as above.
08	Teacher	Okay, well tell me about it.	Teacher maintains position as 'teacher' by authorizing Behroz to be talk about Iranian culture.	Teacher encourages Behroz to begin talking about Iranian text(s) that he has connected to 'Harry Potter' text.
09	Behroz	I mean, first of all that bird Phoenix.	Behroz is positioned by the 'teacher' as an 'authority' on Iranian stories.	Behroz accepts and begins talking about Iranian texts that he has constructed to be connected to the 'Harry Potter' text.
10	Behroz	It's mentioned in our literature, too.	Same as above.	Same as above.
11	Behroz	It's a powerful bird.	Behroz takes up position of 'authority' on Iranian cultural stories.	Same as above.
12	Behroz	But, the owl, they were sending the message with the owl	Same as above.	Same as above (In the 'Harry Potter' text messages were sent via an owl).

		(Mispronounces owl).		
13	Teacher	Owl? (Gives his version of 'correct' pronunciation).	Teacher positions himself as 'English teacher' as he corrects Behroz's pronunciation through example.	
14	Behroz	Owl, yes. (Pronounces owl through copying Teacher)	Behroz is positioned as 'student' as he accepts the teacher's version of the pronunciation of 'owl.'	
15	Behroz	It has its place in our culture.	Behroz takes up position as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture.	Same as above.
16	Behroz	But it's not as good an animal.	Same as above.	Behroz shares with the group his interpretation of differences in meaning of signs between the texts.
17	Behroz	I don't know.	Behroz qualifies or has doubts about his position as 'authority' on Iranian stories.	
18	Behroz	They consider it as a bad thing.	'Builds' his identity as an 'authority' on Iranian stories.	Same as above.
19	Teacher	In Iran?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian stories.	The teacher asks for clarification of meaning to develop conversation.
20	Behroz	Yeah.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' by Teacher as he answers his question.	
21	Behroz	They say if it comes and sits on your roof something terrible will occur.	Behroz builds his position as 'authority' on Iranian cultural stories.	Behroz adds information about his interpretation of the meaning of the sign 'owl' in Iranian cultural contexts, and in doing so has become the central voice of the

				dialogue.
22	Teacher	Really?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian stories.	Teacher becomes active listener to Behroz's interpretation of a sign.
23	Behroz	Yeah.	Behroz is positioned as 'teacher' of Iranian texts by Teacher as he responds to his question.	Behroz responds to Teacher's question; thus, active dialogue is constructed.
24	Behroz	They say it's not a good thing.	Same as above.	Same as above.
25	Merat	What?		Merat attempts to join the conversation by obtaining meaning to facilitate entrance into the group conversation.
26	Teacher	The owl.	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' by answering Merat's question.	Teacher responds to Merat's question.
27	Behroz	(Says the word in Farsi to Merat).	Behroz builds position as linguistic interpreter to assist Merat in entering the interaction.	Behroz facilitates Merat's entrance into the group conversation by serving as interpreter so that Merat can gain access to meaning.
28	Merat	Oh, yeah.	Merat is positioned as 'student' who needs assistance.	Merat enters conversation.
29	Behroz	They say it's bad.	Behroz builds position as 'knowledgeable authority' about Iranian culture.	Behroz continues to elaborate on the meaning of the 'owl' sign in Iranian contexts, in accordance with his interpretation. In doing so, he is centered in the discussion.
30	Behroz	They say if you see that you're going to encounter some difficulties.	Same as above.	Same as above.
31	Teacher	So, when you see an owl you think something bad.	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture.	Teacher seeks clarification of Behroz's meaning, and in doing so builds dialogue.
32	Behroz	What's that? (Says	Behroz is positioned	Behroz responds to

		this to Merat)	by Merat as capable language interpreter.	Merat who is attempting to become an active participant in the conversation.
33	Merat	(Explains something to Behroz in Farsi).	Same as above.	Merat wants to actively participate in conversation that he finds meaningful, but at this point needs Behroz's to facilitate participation through interpretation.
34	Behroz	Oh, he said if the owl is in a room, they think somebody will die.	Behroz 'builds identity' as interpreter.	Behroz has facilitated group conversation and participation through interpretation.
35	Behroz	They don't consider it a good thing.	Behroz 'builds identity' as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture.	Behroz reiterates the meaning, according to his interpretation, of the sign 'owl' in Iranian contexts.
36	Teacher	That's interesting.	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture/texts.	Teacher participates as an active listener.
37	Teacher	The owl is kind of a mysterious bird to us.	Teacher positions himself as 'knowledgeable authority' on North American culture.	Teacher then shares with the other participants his interpretation of the meaning of the sign 'owl' in North American contexts.
38	Teacher	But we consider the owl to be very smart.	Same as above.	Same as above.
39	Behroz	They think it's a sign of bad.	Behroz builds position as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture.	Behroz repeats his previous interpretation of the meaning of the sign in Iranian contexts.
40	Teacher	Okay, now the Phoenix…	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator as he guides the conversation.	Teacher alters the topic.
41	Teacher	The Phoenix bird symbolizes something very good in Iranian culture?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture, and positions Behroz as 'knowledgeable	Teacher again invites participation of 'knowledgeable informants.'

			authority' on Iranian culture.	
42	Behroz	Yeah.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture and Iranian stories.	Behroz accepts invitation to participate through sharing of his interpretations of meaning(s) of sign(s) in Iranian contexts. In this case of the Phoenix bird.
43	Behroz	It actually it's something that is highly placed and everybody try to get there like a mountain far away.	Same as above.	Same as above.
44	Behroz	And I hear lots of stories about the Phoenix.	Same as above.	Same as above.
45	Behroz	There is a good story, it's about one of the poets in Iran that wrote about Phoenix.	Same as above.	Behroz shares meaning of sign/text through story telling.
46	Behroz	It was about little birds that wanted to know what is the Phoenix.	Same as above.	Same as above.
47	Behroz	He called it Seemore (thirty birds) in the meaning.	Same as above.	Same as above.
48	Behroz	They start to travel to see the Phoenix to find out why it's so popular and powerful and what is it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
49	Behroz	And then as they go other birds join them and at the end they couldn't find the Phoenix where they said.	Same as above.	Same as above.
50	Behroz	And then suddenly one of the birds started counting	Same as above.	Same as above.

		and there are thirty.		
51	Behroz	Okay, we are that Phoenix, we are thirty birds.	Same as above.	Same as above.
52	Teacher	Right, right.		
53	Behroz	There are lots of these stories.	Same as above.	Behroz shares with the Teacher that there are many similar texts in Iran.
54	Teacher	Parviz, do you remember any stories growing us as a kid?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator' by directing participation in conversation.	Teacher attempts to get Parviz to participate by inviting him to share familiar stories from his sociocultural world.
55	Teacher	What kind of Iranian stories do you remember? (Parviz remains silent for a moment and Merat responds).	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' by directing participation; however, he fails to direct the conversation as planned because Parviz remains silent. Thus, Parviz is positioned as non-English speaker.	Same as above.
56	Merat	The biggest story is Shah na me.	Merat positions himself as 'knowledgeable cultural informant' and silences Parviz.	Parviz is unable or unwilling to participate. However, Merat quickly takes over and engages in the conversation.
57	Teacher	Okay, tell me about that.	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian stories, but also 'teacher' in that he controls who has the floor.	Teacher allows Merat to have the floor to share 'his' story.
58	Merat	It's a big book.	Merat builds position as 'knowledgeable' about Iranian cultural stories.	Merat becomes the center of the discussion as he shares with the group his interpretation of the central meanings of a classic Iranian story.
59	Merat	Everybody knows about it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
60	Merat	All know what happened, and they all read it two or	Same as above.	Same as above.

		three times at least.		
61	Merat	All Iranian I think.	Same as above.	Same as above.
62	Merat	It's about a story with a lot of meaning.	Same as above.	Same as above.
63	Merat	It's like example of life.	Same as above.	Same as above.
64	Merat	The story.	Same as above.	Same as above.
65	Merat	And they got a character like superman.	Same as above.	Same as above.
66	Merat	Powerful man.	Same as above.	Same as above.
67	Merat	Who believe in God and do everything what he believe.	Same as above.	Same as above.
68	Merat	And do everything for people.	Same as above.	Same as above.
69	Merat	Not for power.	Same as above.	Same as above.
70	Merat	Not for money.	Same as above.	Same as above.
71	Merat	Very popular story.	Same as above.	Same as above.
72	Merat	Fifty, sixty years before, they call it in coffee shop (Briefly talks about it in Farsi with brothers).	Merat builds position as 'knowledgeable' cultural informant not only of stories, but also history, and venues of community storytelling.	Merat shares with the other participants his knowledge about typical historical venues of community storytelling in Iran.
73	Merat	Everybody come over and sit and people read the Shah na me for them.	Same as above.	Same as above.
74	Teacher	Oh, professional story tellers?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture, and also as 'teacher' of English.	Teacher asks question of Merat to negotiate meaning.
75	Merat	Yeah.	Merat is positioned as 'knowledgeable' of Iranian literary worlds by Teacher.	Merat responds to Teacher's question in the process of negotiating meaning.
76	Teacher	And that use to be very important in Iranian culture?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture, and positions other	Teacher again raises questions related to the participants' sociocultural

			participants as 'knowledgeable' cultural informants.	backgrounds to facilitate opportunities for active participation.
77	Teacher	Professional storytellers?	Same as above.	Same as above.
78	Teacher	Would they sit and read? Or just tell?	Same as above.	Same as above.
79	Behroz	At that time lots of people didn't have literacy, so somebody draw the pictures.	Behroz is positioned by Teacher as 'knowledgeable' about Iranian history and literacy practices.	Behroz shares his interpretation of literacy in Iran in an historical context with the group.
80	Behroz	Picture drawn and then in coffee shop,	Same as above.	Behroz becomes centered in the conversation as he shares his interpretation of literacy and story telling in Iranian history.
81	Behroz	And then it was started introducing the characters and the picture and tell them what he did.	Same as above.	Same as above.
82	Behroz	It was the large scenes, it was painted there.	Same as above.	Same as above.
83	Behroz	And he would describe it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
84	Teacher	So, the whole story was pictorial?	Same as above.	Teacher seeks clarification from Behroz as content of conversation becomes centered on Behroz's interpretation.
85	Behroz	No, actually the story was like a poem, a big poem.	Same as above.	Behroz gives clarification of the content of his interpretation as he becomes centered in the participatory structure.
86	Teacher	But, they turned it into a pictorial story?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian history and literacy practices.	Teacher seeks again clarification of Behroz's interpretation.
87	Behroz	They would read the poem but they	Behroz 'builds identity' as	Behroz gives more clarification of his

		point to the pictures.	'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian history and literacy practices.	interpretation of historical Iranian literacy practices.
88	Teacher	Because most of the people couldn't read?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian history and literacy practices.	Teacher asks another question related to the topic, which again centers Behroz in the participation structure of the group.
89	Behroz	Yes.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian history and literacy practices.	Behroz gives a response as he remains centered in the participation structure because he has become the 'knowledgeable authority' in the group.
90	Behroz	It's like the church.	Behroz constructs a position as 'teacher' by making connections to texts he thinks Teacher is familiar with (Western religious texts).	Behroz remains centered as 'knowledgeable authority,' and appears to be helping Teacher make connections with familiar texts in his sociocultural (Western) world.
91	Behroz	The Catholic Church with all the pictures.	Same as above.	Same as above.
92	Behroz	It was like that too.	Same as above.	Same as above.
93	Behroz	It was very important.	Behroz builds position as 'knowledgeable authority.'	Same as above.
94	Behroz	It was like the chivalry kind of…	Same as above.	Same as above.
95	Merat	The biggest…	Merat attempts to 'build identity' as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian cultural history.	Merat attempts to add to the discourse.
96	Behroz	Yeah, the hero, the chivalry.	Behroz 'builds identity' as 'knowledgeable authority' of Iranian cultural history and literature.	Behroz remains the center of the participation structure as 'knowledgeable authority' as he shares with the group more content related to his interpretation of

				historical 'cultural' story.
97	Behroz	We call it Rostan.	Same as above.	Same as above.
98	Behroz	He had great power.	Same as above.	Same as above.
99	Behroz	He went to war with the giants.	Same as above.	Same as above.

In the summary and commentary of the preceding chart, I will again give an overview of what I perceived to be the development of identities of the participants indicated in the message units. Secondly, I will give commentary about participation during the excerpt. Finally, I will discuss participation structure(s) that changed in relation to participation structure(s) that were depicted in the first two excerpts in this chapter.

At the start of the preceding excerpt from the data, 'Teacher' positions himself as a knowledgeable authority about 'Western' popular texts as he interprets and defines the 'Harry Potter' video (Columbus, 2002) for the participants, and he acknowledges the difficulties the participants may be having understanding 'Western' popular texts, which positions the other participants as cultural outsiders. However, unlike the first two excerpts in this chapter, Teacher attempts to make intertextual connections with the participants' previous sociocultural worlds by asking: "Are there any stories like this from your own culture?" (03). Therefore, Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator' who is giving 'students' opportunities to share about their 'culture.' Thus, Teacher begins to position the participants as 'authorities' on Iranian culture, which Behroz begins to take up (03-07). At the same time, Teacher maintains his position as 'teacher' by 'authorizing' Behroz to share his interpretations on 'Iranian culture' (08). Behroz takes up his position as an 'authority' on Iranian cultural stories by sharing his

interpretations of signs that were embedded in the 'Harry Potter' text (video) and compares meanings with comparable signs found in Iranian texts (09-18). Through sharing his interpretations of the meanings of signs found in Iranian stories, he 'builds' his identity within the group as an 'authority' on Iranian stories. At the same time, Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian stories as he listens to Behroz and asks questions (19). It also appears that Behroz is positioned as 'teacher' of Iranian texts by Teacher as he informs Teacher about Iranian cultural stories (19-24).

Merat is positioned as 'student' as he gains entrance into the interaction by asking about the content of the discussion, and Teacher and Behroz respond (25-27). In the process, Behroz is positioned as a capable interpreter as he facilitates Merat's entrance into the conversation (27), and Merat is positioned as 'student' who needs assistance (28). These identities are constructed further in lines 32-34 as Merat uses Behroz as a language interpreter to convey his meanings to the group. Thus, Behroz 'builds' identities as bilingual interpreter and 'authority' on Iranian culture; Merat is positioned as a 'student' who needs support (32-34).

Teacher positions himself as 'student' of 'Iranian culture' (31 & 36), yet he also positions himself as 'knowledgeable authority' on North American culture (37-38) as he shares with the group an interpretation of meanings related to a sign (owl) as seen in the 'Harry Potter' video (37-38). It should be pointed out that even though Teacher positions himself as 'student' of 'Iranian cultural stories,' he also changes positions from 'student' to 'teacher' or 'facilitator' from time to time (40), in order to guide the conversation. Yet, when Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture, as he appears to be through much of the preceding excerpt, Teacher positions

himself as 'student' of Iranian 'cultural stories,' although he never really gives up his authority as 'teacher.' Thus, there is little or no conflict, nor are identities contested, at least between Behroz and Teacher. For instance, Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' and 'builds' that identity (42-51), as Teacher acknowledges Behroz's position (52).

Nonetheless, as mentioned earlier, Teacher constructs his position as 'teacher' or 'facilitator' from time to time in order to direct the conversation. For instance, Teacher tried to get Parviz involved in the conversation (without much success in this excerpt) by directing questions at him (54-55). Parviz remains silent. However, Merat quickly takes the floor and is positioned as a 'knowledgeable cultural informant' along with Behroz (56). Teacher encourages the construction of this identity for Merat (57), and again positions himself as 'student' to allow space for Merat to become centered as a 'knowledgeable authority.' Thus, Merat shares with the group his interpretation of a classical Iranian story entitled, "Shah na me" (56, 58-71). Merat then builds his position as a 'knowledgeable authority' on the story "Shah na me," he also makes explicit his knowledge about historical venues of community storytelling in Iran (72-73).

Behroz takes over from Merat and is positioned in the group as knowledgeable about historical Iranian storytelling practices, as Teacher positions himself as 'student' of historical storytelling practices in Iran. In short, Behroz becomes centered in the group as he shares his interpretation(s) of how storytelling traditionally occurred in historical Iranian venues (79-87). When Behroz shares his interpretations, Teacher continues to position himself as 'student' of Iranian historical storytelling practices (88),

which also creates space for Behroz to be centered or positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' of the group (89).

In lines 90-92, Behroz builds a position as 'teacher' by making connections to texts that he believes Teacher will be familiar with. Specifically, he makes intertextual connections between Western religious texts and Iranian texts for the purpose of facilitating access or understanding for Teacher.

Finally, at the end of the excerpt, Behroz 'builds identity' as a 'knowledgeable authority.' He does this by sharing with the group interpretations about a classical Iranian story (94, 96-99).

As shown, the participation structure in the preceding excerpt is very different than the participation structure(s) in the first two excerpts of this section. In the subsequent summary about participation, I will focus on these changes.

At the start of the excerpt, the 'teacher' acknowledges that the text (video) the group had viewed, "Harry Potter and the chamber of secrets" (Columbus, 2002), is unfamiliar to the participants; therefore, he implies that embedded signs in the text may very well be difficult to decipher because the participants are unfamiliar with what the signs mean in the context of Western popular texts. Thus, the intent of Teacher is to change the participation structure from when the participants remained silent for much of the interaction and Teacher was centered. Therefore, Teacher attempts to make intertextual connections between "Harry Potter" (Columbus, 2002) and comparable texts from the participants' sociocultural worlds (03-05). Behroz immediately acknowledges that there are similar texts in Iran (06-07), and Teacher encourages Behroz to talk about them (08). Behroz then shares with the group his interpretation of

the meaning of the sign "Phoenix" found in Iranian texts, which is a 'sign' viewed by the group in the video. He does the same with the sign 'owl,' which is a meaningful sign in "Harry Potter;" however, Behroz shares with the group his interpretation that 'owl' means something different in Iranian texts (12, 14-18, 20-21, 23-24). Specifically, he points out to the group that the sign 'owl' as a motif in Iranian literature and other Iranian texts usually means "a bad thing" (18), which by inference he is pointing out that the same 'sign' can have very different meanings in cross-cultural contexts.

But what is most relevant for our discussion here is that Behroz becomes the center of interaction as opposed to Teacher, who was the one centered most of the time in early excerpts of the data that were collected in the first few classes of the course. Specifically, as Berhoz shares his interpretation of the meaning of the sign 'owl' in Iranian texts, he becomes the central voice of the conversation, and Teacher becomes an active listener.

Merat also is engaged in the interaction (25-28) as Teacher and Behroz negotiate meaning(s) with him. Thus, Merat struggles to enter the conversation and actively participate, as he enters through the use of Farsi, and uses Behroz as an interpreter (32-34).

Throughout, Teacher has implicit control of the direction of the conversation (40), but he invites or encourages participation through positioning the other participants as 'knowledgeable cultural informants' by asking questions about the meanings of particular signs in 'Iranian culture' (41). Behroz accepts this positioning, and becomes centered in the interaction through sharing his interpretations of meanings

of signs in Iranian texts, as can be seen when he shares with the group his interpretation of an Iranian story about a "Phoenix" (42-51).

Teacher attempts to get Parviz to participate in the interaction (Saeed did not attend this class) by directly asking him if he remembers any Iranian stories, but he does not respond immediately and Merat takes over (54-56). The excerpt occurs during the third week of the course, and Parviz is still positioned, by the group at this point, as 'non-English speaker;' therefore, the other participants often take over for him, although this changes later on in the course as Parviz's participation level rises, which will be discussed later on.

Merat becomes eager to participate when the conversation is about texts related to Iran. He shares with the group his interpretation of the story 'Shah na me,' and by doing so Merat becomes centered in the participation (58-71). In addition, Merat shares with the group his interpretation of historical venues of community storytelling in Iran as stated earlier (72-73 & 75). Teacher and Merat negotiate meaning related to professional storytelling in the past in Iran (74-77), then Behroz shares his interpretation of what storytelling used to mean in Iran years ago. Thus, Merat and Behroz share cultural information with a cultural outsider and by doing so are positioned as 'knowledgeable authorities,' which centers them in the participation structure in the excerpt.

Near the end of the excerpt, Behroz is not only centered as 'knowledgeable authority,' he becomes positioned as the teacher; He attempts to help 'Teacher' make intertextual connections by citing familiar 'Western' texts so that Teacher can better understand the text that he, Behroz, is constructing about 'traditional' Iranian

storytelling texts (90-92). By the end of the excerpt, Behroz remains centered in the group interaction as 'knowledgeable authority' (94, 96-99).

This excerpt indicates that the participation structure constructed in the data here is different from the participation structures that were constructed during the very beginning of the course. The change occurs when Teacher steers the conversation towards Iranian texts and contexts, through making intertextual connections between a 'Western' popular text (Columbus, 2002) and similar 'Iranian' texts, Behroz and Merat appeared confident and empowered. At times Merat and Behroz become centered in the participatory structure. While Parviz is still not participating much at this point in the course, clearly change is apparent compared to excerpts taken from data collected during the first few classes of the course.

The reasons for the change are two-fold. First, Teacher allowed and even facilitated change by guiding the topic and questioning towards content that related to the sociocultural worlds of the participants. Secondly, the participants became more confident and empowered when given the opportunity to interact about familiar texts, and they became confident enough to take up positions that centered them in the interaction.

The following excerpt from the data was obtained through audiotape on July 14th, 2004, at the end of the fourth week of the course. Merat and Saeed were late to this class because their car broke down on there way back home from work. Because Merat is a mechanic, he fixed the car himself, and they both arrived later that night. Thus, only Parviz, Behroz, and Teacher were present for this excerpt from the data. The topics of

conversation were about signs connected to advertising and about signs and symbols related to automobiles.

Table 18: Excerpt 16

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Identities Indicated in Message Unit	Commentary about Participation
01	Teacher	What about the United States?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' by questioning participants.	Teacher is questioning the participants for the purpose of generating participation.
02	Teacher	What advertising sticks out most in your mind here?	Same as above.	Same as above.
03	Parviz	Verizon, Nike.	Parviz is positioned as student by responding to the 'teacher's' questions.	Parviz is able to engage in the conversation with a response.
04	Teacher	Yeah.	Teacher retains position as 'teacher' by giving affirmative feedback for 'appropriate' response.	Teacher supports Parviz's participation with affirmative response.
05	Parviz	I think…Reebok.	Parviz retains position as 'student' by continuing to provide responses to 'teacher's' question.	Parviz participates in conversation, although responses are limited.
06	Teacher	Reebok, okay.	Teacher retains position as 'teacher' by giving affirmative feedback for 'appropriate' response.	Teacher supports and encourages Parviz's participation through response.
07	Teacher	What cars?	Teacher continues to position himself as 'teacher' by questioning participants.	Teacher continues to encourage Parviz's participation through direct questioning.
08	Teacher	Do you notice car signs?	Same as above.	Same as above.
09	Parviz	Benz.	Parviz retains position as 'student' by continuing to provide responses to 'teacher's' question.	Parviz continues to participate with responses, although responses are limited.
10	Teacher	What does a Benz look like?	Teacher continues to position himself as 'teacher' by questioning	Teacher continues to encourage Parviz's participation through

			participants.	questioning.
11	Parviz	Like (Quickly draws a picture of the sign).	Parviz retains position as 'student' by responding 'appropriately' to 'teacher's' question.	Parviz continues to participate, although his participation is mostly non-linguistic, it is meaningful participation.
12	Teacher	Do they have a lot of Mercedes in Iran?	Teacher begins to make transition from 'teacher' to 'cultural learner' or 'student.'	Teacher invites further participation by relating question more directly to the sociocultural worlds of the participants.
13	Behroz	They don't allow the imports of new cars.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' by Teacher.	Behroz participates as a 'cultural informant.'
14	Teacher	Oh, they have to be assembled?	Teacher positions himself as 'cultural' learner or 'student.'	Teacher participates as a 'learner.'
15	Behroz	Yeah, because they want to promote their own lands so there's not much foreigner cars.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' about use of automobiles in Iran.	Behroz becomes centered in the participation as he shares with the group his interpretation about the auto industry in Iran.
16	Behroz	When there is it's like '92.	Same as above.	Same as above.
17	Behroz	Not more than '92.	Same as above.	Same as above.
18	Teacher	Oh, I see, it's older cars.	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of auto industry in Iran.	Teacher participates as 'learner' and encourages Behroz to continue to 'culturally share.'
19	Behroz	They can, but very rare.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable authority' about auto industry in Iran.	Behroz continues to participate as 'center of knowledge.'
20	Behroz	Yeah, but it's very famous there Mercedes.	Same as above.	Same as above.
21	Teacher	What about Mazda?	Teacher begins to reposition himself back to 'teacher' as he will claim 'cultural knowledge.'	Teacher attempts to enhance participation further by making intertextual connections related to

				both topic of current conversation and text(s) related to participants' sociocultural worlds.
22	Behroz	It's something like this. In a circle… (He quickly draws his interpretation of a Mazda sign).	Behroz holds on to position as 'cultural authority.'	Behroz participates through a response that is both linguistic and pictorial.
23	Teacher	Yeah. By the way, do you know where Mazda comes from?	Teacher positions himself back as 'teacher' by quizzing Behroz.	Teacher attempts to enhance conversation (participation) by making connections to texts in Iran.
24	Behroz	Origin?	Behroz begins to be positioned back as 'student' and seeks clarification from the 'teacher.'	Behroz seeks clarification so that he can continue to participate in conversation.
25	Behroz	Country?	Same as above.	Same as above.
26	Teacher	Yeah, the name Mazda?	Teacher confirms question.	Teacher attempts again to facilitate participation amongst the participants by making connections to familiar texts.
27	Behroz	We have a Mazda in our language.	Behroz shares 'cultural' knowledge with Teacher.	Behroz recognizes familiar religious text from Iran.
28	Teacher	Zoroastrian God, right?	Teacher retains position as 'teacher' by affirming Behroz's 'cultural' information as correct.	Teacher confirms the intertextual connection.
29	Behroz	Yes.	Behroz helps to construct Teacher's position as 'knowledgeable' about Iran by confirming information is correct.	Behroz acknowledges that the text has connections with religious texts in Iran. However, he doesn't recognize the intertextual connection between the religious text in Iran and a large corporate entity.
30	Teacher	That's where it	Teacher 'builds' or	Teacher makes the

		came from.	constructs identity as 'knowledgeable authority' about intertextual connections between 'borrowed' religious signs and modern global capitalism.	intertextual connection between the religious text in Iran (Zoroastrianism) and a large global corporation (Mazda). Thus, he becomes centered in the conversation.
31	Teacher	They borrowed it.	Same as above.	Same as above.
32	Teacher	Zoroastrianism.	Same as above.	Same as above.
33	Behroz	I didn't know that.	Behroz positions himself as 'student.'	Behroz recognizes the connection.
34	Teacher	Yeah, they did.	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher.'	Teacher confirms the connection.
35	Behroz	Good to know.	Behroz positions himself as 'student.'	Behroz acknowledges the interest in the intertextual connection.
36	Teacher	I thought you would know Mazda because of Zoroastrianism.	Teacher positions Behroz as 'knowledgeable' about Iranian religions.	Teacher shares with Behroz that he thinks of him as 'knowledgeable' about Iranian signs. Implicitly, he shares with Behroz his strategy to facilitate participation.
37	Behroz	I thought it was kind of Japanese.	Behroz positions himself as 'learner' or 'student.'	Behroz shares with Teacher why his participation was limited.

For the preceding excerpt, I will once again provide summary and commentary about identities indicated in the message units, and summary and commentary about participation. In addition, I will give my interpretations about participation structure and any changes in participation structure(s) from previous excerpts from the data.

At the beginning of the preceding excerpt, Teacher positions himself as the 'teacher' by directing the topic of conversation, which is about advertising in general,

and the use of signs as corporate signifiers in particular (01-02). Parviz responds to the question with an 'appropriate' response; thus, he is positioned as 'student' (03). Teacher and Parviz continue this pattern of 'teacher' questions and 'student' responses; thus, the position of Teacher as 'teacher' and Parviz as 'student' is clearly constructed in the beginning of the excerpt (01-11).

In line 12, a transition begins as Teacher asks: "Do they have a lot of Mercedes in Iran?" By asking this question the topic of conversation begins to change to a different venue, namely an Iranian context. This in turn causes the positioning of Teacher to begin to change from 'teacher' to 'cultural learner' or 'student.' Behroz responds to the question with information that Teacher is unaware of; therefore, Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' in the group as he shares with Teacher content about the use of automobiles in Iran (13-20).

In line 21, Teacher asks: "What about Mazda?" In asking this question, Teacher repositions himself back to 'teacher' because his authority changes the topic and he takes the topic of conversation to a domain where he has more knowledge than the participants. That is, the participants have never been to Japan, while Teacher has lived in Hiroshima, Japan (where Mazda is headquartered) and worked part-time for Mazda subsidiaries. However, his intent, which will become clear, is to make intertextual connections with texts that the participants are familiar with. Behroz responds to the question by drawing his interpretation of what a 'Mazda' corporate sign looks like (22). Teacher positions himself back as 'teacher' by quizzing Behroz by asking him: "By the way, do you know where Mazda comes from?" (23). Behroz is not clear about the question; thus, he seeks clarification (24-25), and Teacher confirms what he is looking

for (26). Then Behroz shares 'cultural' knowledge with the 'teacher' that "We have a Mazda in our language" (27), which was the response the 'teacher' was looking for.

Teacher retains position as 'teacher' by affirming that 'Behroz's 'cultural information' is 'correct,' but at the same time Teacher positions himself as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' by asking: "Zoroastrian God, right?" (28). Behroz subsequently responds, "Yes" (29). By responding affirmatively to Teacher's rhetorical question about Iran's indigenous religion (Zoroastrianism), Behroz helps to construct Teacher's position as 'knowledgeable authority' about a particular Iranian text. Teacher then 'builds' or constructs his identity as a 'knowledgeable authority' about intertextual connections between 'borrowed' ancient Iranian religious signs and modern global capitalism (30-32).

At the end of the excerpt, Behroz positions himself as 'student' as he claims no previous knowledge about intertextual connections between indigenous Iranian religious sign(s) and modern global corporate texts. He states: "I didn't know that" (33), and "I thought it was kind of Japanese" (37). Nonetheless, Teacher positions Behroz as 'knowledgeable' about Iranian religions when he states: "I thought you would know Mazda because of Zoroastrianism." (36).

Teacher began the excerpt by questioning the participants about advertising and advertising signs that they were familiar with for the purpose of generating participation (01-02). Because Merat and Saeed showed up late to this class, Parviz had more space to participate during this excerpt from the data compared to others, which he does by responding to questions from Teacher about corporate signs he can recognize in advertising (03, 05, 09, & 11). His responses are short; nonetheless, this excerpt shows

that he has begun to be a vocal participant, which is a change from the first couple of weeks of classes when he was a non-participant as far as speaking is concerned, although he has been an intensive listener throughout the course.

When Teacher asks a question about automobiles in Iran (12), he deliberately creates space for someone to take up the position of 'knowledgeable cultural authority,' which Behroz does (13). Therefore, Teacher invites further participation by relating questions more directly to the sociocultural worlds of the participants. Thus, Behroz begins to participate as a 'cultural informant,' and builds identity as a knowledgeable cultural authority. At the same time, Teacher begins to participate as a 'learner.' In other words, Behroz becomes centered in the participation structure as he shares with the group his interpretations about the automobile industry in Iran (13, 15-17, & 19-20).

Teacher then attempts to make intertextual connections between signs, seen in advertising, that are connected to automobiles, and signs or texts that relate to Iran. He points out a connection between signs that are the same but have two different meanings in a cross-cultural context—specifically, a sign that relates to Iran's indigenous religion, Zoroastrianism, and an automobile company in Japan. He asks, "What about Mazda?" (21). Behroz responds in a way that is both linguistic and pictorial (22). His interpretation of a sign relates to an automobile corporation from Japan, which is logical at this point because the context of the conversation is still about signs in contemporary advertising. However, Teacher begins to facilitate an intertextual connection by suggesting that the sign Mazda can signify something entirely different (23). As a consequence, Behroz begins to negotiate meaning with Teacher because he isn't clear what Teacher is asking, so he seeks clarification (24-25). Teacher repeats the name

(Mazda) (26). Then Behroz recognizes a familiar text that relates to religion from Iran. He states: "We have a Mazda in our language" (27). Then Teacher confirms the connection: "Zoroastrian God, right?" (28). Behroz responds with "yes" (29). At that point, Behroz acknowledges that the sign has connections with religious texts in Iran, but he doesn't yet recognize the intertextual connection between the religious sign from Iran and the same sign as connected to a corporate entity from Japan. As a consequence, Teacher becomes centered in the participation structure because he claims 'knowledge' as he makes explicit an intertextual connection between Zoroastrianism and a large global corporation—Mazda. Behroz ultimately acknowledges and recognizes the intertextual connection (33 & 35), and at the same time is positioned as 'student' as he states: "I didn't know that" (33) and "I thought it was kind of Japanese" (37). Teacher then makes it explicit that his intention was to make connections to the participants' sociocultural backgrounds, and Behroz explains why his participation was limited because he was under the impression that the text was foreign (37).

The participation structure in this excerpt from the data is different in some respects from the first three excerpts displayed in this section. Parviz does participate vocally, unlike early on in the course, when he remained silent, as shown in the first two excerpts in this section. My explanations for the reasons for the change are as follows: First, Parviz had gained more confidence using English in the group setting by the end of the fourth week of classes; second, Parviz had more space to participate because two of the participants were late for the class, and the preceding excerpt was taken before the arrival of the two; and third, Teacher chose a topic that related to Parviz's

sociocultural worlds. Nike and Reebok have signs that are recognized globally, including in Iran, which the participants themselves shared with the author.

The interaction that has occurred between Behroz and Teacher is more complex. The participation structure is not clearly centered on Teacher or Behroz because they often negotiate meaning together.

The intent of Teacher was to enhance the participation level of Behroz and Parviz by focusing on a topic that related to their sociocultural backgrounds. However, even though Behroz was aware of Mazda as a sign that signifies a corporate entity, and that Mazda is a sign that also signifies God in the Zoroastrian religion, he was unaware of the conscious borrowing of a religious sign by a corporate entity. Teacher was aware of the connection because he had taught English in Hiroshima, Japan (Corporate headquarters of Mazda), and had spoken with Mazda employees who had shared this connection with him. Thus, at times Teacher became the 'center' of knowledge and, as a result, more the center of participation at times. Nonetheless, positions were negotiated and there was space for participation by all the participants present because Teacher had made a strategic decision to move away from discourse that focused solely on 'Western' popular texts, emphasizing instead connections between 'Western' popular and other texts to texts that the participants were more familiar with from their own sociocultural backgrounds.

The last excerpt to be displayed in this chapter was obtained through audiotape on August 11, 2004. Specifically, it was taken at the end of the seventh week of the course, and the second to last class (personal interviews were held during the last class).

The excerpt is another example where the conversation started out with discussion about 'Western' texts, but intertextual connections were made with Iranian texts, which had an impact on participation 'structure(s).' Specifically, the conversation related to the concept (and sign) of family and the interpretation of this sign in 'U.S. American' contexts, including popular texts, as well as in 'Iranian' texts and contexts such as family gatherings during Persian New Year (Naw Ruz).

Table 19: Excerpt 17

#	Speaker	Message Unit	Identities Indicated in Message Unit	Commentary about Participation
01	Teacher	Okay, what does the word family mean to you?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' by directing questions.	Teacher facilitates participation amongst the participants by making connections to familiar texts.
02	Merat	Mafia. (Laughter from other participants).	Merat positions himself as comedian, but also as knowledgeable about 'Western' texts.	Merat participates through an identity of being humorous.
03	Teacher	The Mafia?		
04	Teacher	Where did you hear the word Mafia?	Teacher retains position as 'teacher.'	Teacher attempts to facilitate participation for Merat by asking questions that could create intertextual connections.
05	Teacher	Did you hear the word Mafia in Iran?	Same as above.	Same as above.
06	Teacher	Or did you hear it here?	Same as above.	Same as above.
07	Merat	Everywhere.	Merat repositions himself as 'student' who wishes to relinquish the floor by vague response.	Merat limits his participation by giving vague response.
08	Teacher	The family.		
09	Merat	Mafia? No. Same as Behroz.	Merat positions Behroz as 'knowledgeable authority' in group by	Merat limits his participation by explicitly naming

			connecting his 'response' to a response given by Behroz earlier.	Behroz as the 'authority'.
10	Teacher	Parviz, what does the word family mean to you?	Teacher retains position as 'teacher' as he directs questioning with expectations of a response.	Teacher attempts to give Parviz space to participate by directing the questioning towards him.
11	Parviz	I don't know, a small group.	Parviz is positioned as 'student' by giving a response to the 'teacher.'	Parviz participates, but it is limited.
12	Parviz	They are very close together, you know.	Same as above.	Same as above.
13	Teacher	Do you think the word family has different meanings in the United States and in Iran?	Teacher begins to make transition from 'teacher' to 'cultural learner' or 'student.'	Teacher attempts to facilitate participation by making intertextual connections to texts that the 'teacher' believes are familiar to the group.
14	Teacher	When people look at the word family, do you think it means something different to Iranians and Americans?	Same as above.	Same as above.
15	Saeed	I think in Iran family means bigger than here.	Saeed takes up invitation to be 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Saeed participates as he shares 'knowledge' of a familiar text.
16	Teacher	Please explain.	Teacher confirms Saeed's position as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Teacher encourages participation by acknowledging Saeed as knowledgeable about discourse.
17	Saeed	Grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, cousins, all the family.	Saeed accepts the position as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' as he gives his interpretation of what 'family' means in Iran.	Saeed is able to participate through familiarity of text(s).
18	Saeed	But here, father,	Saeed retains his	Same as above.

		mother, son, and daughter.	position as 'knowledgeable authority' as he gives his interpretation of differences of what 'family' means in Iran and the United States.	
19	Teacher	Nuclear family?	Teacher repositions himself as 'teacher' by assisting Saeed with relevant lexical terms.	Teacher attempts to facilitate participation by introducing English terms that relate to the topic of conversation.
20	Saeed	Yeah, I don't know exactly, but the family in Iran are so big.	Saeed is positioned as English learner, but at the same time he retains his position as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' on Iran.	Saeed continues participation because he is familiar with text(s).
21	Teacher	Okay, is that right, Merat?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator' as he allows Merat a chance to respond by managing turn-taking.	Teacher attempts to allow Merat to participate by directly asking him a question.
22	Merat	Yes.		Merat limits his participation by giving short response.
23	Teacher	When you guys were living in Iran, in your city.	Teacher attempts to reposition himself to 'cultural learner' or 'student' to allow space for participants to take up position as 'cultural authorities.'	Teacher continues to try to facilitate participation by relating topic to familiar texts.
24	Teacher	Did a lot of your family get together often?	Same as above.	Same as above.
25	Behroz	Yes.		Behroz gives short response.
26	Teacher	On what occasions did they get together?	Teacher attempts to position himself as 'cultural learner.'	Teacher again attempts to facilitate participation by asking question that relates to the sociocultural world of

				the participants.
27	Behroz	I mean, the close family visited at least once a week.	Behroz takes up the position as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Behroz participates with response about his family life in Iran.
28	Teacher	What is close?	Teacher positions himself as 'cultural learner.'	Teacher facilitates conversation by positioning himself as 'learner,' which creates opportunities for participants to participate as 'teachers.'
29	Behroz	Like grandmother, grandfather, uncles, if they are close by, you know?	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Behroz is centered in the participation as he shares his interpretation of 'Iranian culture.'
30	Behroz	I mean, like there are some occasions when they just go and visit everyone around like New Year's eve.	Behroz 'builds' position as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Same as above.
31	Teacher	New Year's Eve?		
32	Behroz	Yeah, like a tradition.	Same as above.	Same as above.
33	Teacher	Like Naw Ruz?	Teacher positions himself as a 'knowledgeable student' of 'Iranian culture.'	Teacher shares 'knowledge' of Iranian festival, which allows him to participate as a 'cultural insider' to a limited degree.
34	Behroz	Yes, Naw Ruz.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Behroz is centered in the participation as 'authority.'
35	Behroz	So, they just go and visit every family and friend.	Same as above.	Same as above.
36	Teacher	Is Naw Ruz the biggest celebration where everybody gets together?	Teacher positions himself as cultural learner or 'student.'	Teacher participates as 'cultural learner.'
37	Behroz	Yes.		Behroz participates as the 'cultural

				authority.'
38	Teacher	And that's for everyone, all religions?	Same as above.	Teacher participates as 'cultural learner.'
39	Behroz	Yes, Naw Ruz in national, it's not religious.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority.'	Behroz participates as the 'cultural authority.'
40	Behroz	National kind of…	Same as above.	
41	Teacher	Holiday?	Teacher repositions himself as 'teacher' as he assists Behroz with relevant lexical assistance.	Teacher facilitates participation by introducing relevant vocabulary.
42	Behroz	Holiday.	Behroz is positioned as English 'student' as he accepts linguistic assistance from the 'teacher.'	
43	Teacher	What have you noticed about families in the United States?	Teacher repositions himself as 'teacher' as he redirects the topic of discussion.	Teacher attempts to enhance participation by making intertextual connections.
44	Teacher	For example, you said in Iran people get together with their family about once a week.	Same as above.	Same as above.
45	Teacher	Does that happen here?	Same as above.	Same as above.
46	Teacher	What differences do you see, Saeed?	Teacher remains positioned as 'teacher' as he directs question to Saeed and manages turn-taking.	Teacher asks Saeed direct question for the purpose of enhancing participation.
47	Saeed	Nobody has got enough time.	Saeed is positioned as 'student' as he gives an answer that relates to the question asked by the 'teacher.'	Saeed participates as participant who has knowledge of 'U.S. American culture'.
48	Teacher	Nobody has got enough time?	Teacher remains positioned as 'teacher' as he confirms and redirects question to other participants.	Confirms response.
49	Behroz	Because they are so	Behroz builds position	Behroz participates as

		scattered around the country.	as 'knowledgeable' about U.S. American culture.	participant who has knowledge of 'U.S. American culture'.
50	Behroz	They just visit on Thanksgiving or special days.	Same as above.	Same as above.
51	Behroz	They all fly.	Same as above.	Same as above.
52	Teacher	Thanksgiving is the big day when people get together.	Teacher confirms 'validity' of Behroz's response; thus, he positions Behroz as 'knowledgeable' about U.S. American culture.	
53	Behroz	Yeah, everybody is involved, so involved with everyday life.	Behroz is positioned as 'knowledgeable' about U.S. American culture.	Same as above.
54	Behroz	They crave time.	Same as above.	Same as above.
55	Behroz	Time to get together.	Same as above.	Same as above.
56	Teacher	That's true.	Teacher confirms 'validity' of Behroz's discourse. Therefore, Behroz continues to build position as 'knowledgeable' about U.S. American culture.	Teacher supports and confirms Behroz's interpretation of 'U.S. American family life.'
57	Behroz	Families here are smaller too.	Same as above.	Behroz's makes intertextual connections, which facilitates participation.
58	Behroz	I mean, like in Iran families average three or more children. I guess…	Behroz positions himself as 'knowledgeable cultural authority' on Iran and 'teacher' by changing topic.	Same as above.
59	Teacher	Is that true, even today a lot of Iranian families have…	Teacher is positioned as 'student' of Iranian culture.	Teacher participates as 'learner.'
60	Teacher	What's the average size, four, five?	Same as above.	Same as above.
61	Teacher	Do you have any more brothers or sisters?	Same as above.	Same as above.
62	Saeed	No.		Saeed attempts to participate.

63	Teacher	Is normal size, four?	Same as above.	Teacher supports Saeed's attempt to participate by directly asking him a question.
64	Saeed	Yeah, but it's getting…	Saeed attempts to build position as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture and society.	Saeed attempts to respond.
65	Behroz	It depends.	Behroz takes over and positions himself as the 'authority' on Iranian culture and society.	Behroz takes over as 'center' of participation because he positions himself as an 'authority.'
66	Behroz	It depends on the position.	Same as above.	Same as above.
67	Behroz	In the rural area they are much crowded than the cities.	Same as above.	Same as above.
68	Teacher	So, they have bigger families?	Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture.	
69	Behroz	Yes, they have, they do.	Behroz positions himself as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iranian culture and society.	Same as above.
70	Behroz	In the cities they have two, but yeah it's changing.	Same as above.	Same as above.
71	Teacher	How do you think families are depicted in the popular culture?	Teacher transitions back to U.S. American popular texts, and he repositions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator.'	Teacher takes over as 'teacher' by switching topic back to 'U.S. popular texts.'
72	Teacher	Have you seen T.V. shows where they have families?	Same as above.	Same as above.
73	Teacher	How are they depicted?	Same as above.	Same as above.
74	Teacher	What do they look like?	Same as above.	Same as above.
75	Teacher	How are they shown?	Same as above.	Same as above.
76	Saeed	Almost the same.	Saeed is positioned as	Saeed participates by

			'student' by responding to Teacher's question with a response that is short and ambiguous.	responding to Teacher's question.
77	Behroz	They tend to show the problems in families.	Behroz is positioned as 'student' by Teacher as Teacher switches back to subject that he is the 'authority' (U.S. American culture).	Behroz participates by responding to Teacher's question.
78	Teacher	They emphasize the problems?	Teacher positions himself as 'teacher.'	
79	Behroz	The problems between generations, and they are all quarrelling with each other.	Behroz is positioned by Teacher as student; however, he positions himself as 'knowledgeable' student by explicit, expansive responses.	Behroz participates as 'student' by responding to Teacher's question; however, he begins to participate as 'knowledgeable' student even though the topic is about U.S. popular texts.
80	Behroz	And like they are all watching T.V. and minding their own business.	Same as above.	Same as above.
81	Behroz	And they spend lots of time together.	Same as above.	Same as above.
82	Behroz	That's what I've seen on T.V.	Same as above.	Same as above.

In my review of the preceding excerpt, I will begin by summarizing the identities indicated in the message units. Then, I will summarize my comments about participation practices by group members. And finally, I will share my interpretations about changes in the participation structure indicated in the excerpt.

The excerpt begins once again with Teacher positioning himself as 'teacher' by directing questions to the other participants. Merat gives a one word response (Mafia) with the intention of being humorous (02); thus, he positions himself, as he did on other

occasions during the course, as a comedian. However, it appears that Merat subsequently repositions himself as a 'student' who doesn't want to be centered in the participation of the group by giving a one-word response and, then, positioning Behroz as the 'knowledgeable authority' in the group (09). He becomes a passive or marginal participant in the rest of the excerpt, perhaps because of a lack of interest in the topic because in other excerpts he was a very active participant.

Teacher makes a transition from 'teacher' to 'learner' or 'student' by asking a question that changes the topic to the meaning of 'family' in Iran (13-14). Saeed takes up the position of 'knowledgeable authority' by sharing with Teacher his interpretation of family structures in Iran (15, 17-18, & 20), although Teacher briefly repositions himself as 'teacher' when he shares with Saeed a term (nuclear family) that related to Saeed's explanation (19).

Teacher positions himself as 'teacher' again as he attempts to give Merat a chance 'to take the floor' by questioning him (21); however, Merat again gives a one word response and remains positioned as a 'student' who participates at a minimal level (22). Yet, Teacher does reposition himself to 'cultural learner' or 'student of Iran' by changing the subject to Iran (23-24 & 26). In doing so, he allows space for the participants to take up the position of 'knowledgeable cultural authority,' which Behroz does significantly. Saeed does as well, although not as prominently as Behroz. Specifically, Behroz shares with the group interpretations of family life in Iran by discussing typical family member visits, what constitutes extended family, and family celebrations of holidays, particularly a holiday called Naw Ruz (Persian New Year). In addition, he shares his general interpretation of what the 'sign' family means in Iran

(25, 27, 29-30, 32, 34-35, 37, 39-40, & 42). By sharing his 'knowledge,' Behroz is positioned by Teacher as a 'knowledgeable cultural authority,' although Teacher does briefly reposition himself as 'teacher' when he assists Behroz with vocabulary (41).

Teacher then repositions himself as 'teacher' when he redirects the topic of discussion back to families in the United States (43). He directed a question to Saeed (46), and Saeed responds (47). This seems to indicate Teacher's attempt to increase Saeed's participation; however, when Teacher repeats Saeed's response (48), Behroz takes over and positions himself as 'knowledgeable' about U.S. American culture as well by sharing with the group his interpretation of U.S. American family life (49-51, 53-55 & 57).

In line 58, Behroz changes the topic back to Iran, and by doing so, he not only positions himself as 'knowledgeable cultural authority,' but he also positions himself as 'teacher' by redirecting the topic of conversation. However, Teacher allows the positioning and the redirecting of the topic of conversation. Subsequently, Teacher positions himself as 'student' of Iranian culture as he asks the group questions about families in Iran (59-61). Saeed attempts to position himself as 'knowledgeable authority' on Iran; however, Behroz takes over and positions himself as the 'authority' on 'Iranian culture' for the cultural outsider (65-67, 69-70). At the same time, Teacher positioned himself as 'student of Iranian culture' (68).

Finally, near the end of the excerpt, Teacher transitions back to U.S. American popular texts, and he repositions himself as 'teacher' or 'facilitator' (71-75). Saeed gives a brief response (76), which is short and ambiguous, and therefore is positioned as 'student' by responding to the 'teacher's question. Behroz responds to the question,

although he positions himself as more knowledgeable by giving explicit, expansive responses to the 'teacher' (79-82).

It appears that in the beginning of the excerpt, Teacher attempts to facilitate participation by making connections to texts that the participants are more familiar with and by attempting to make intertextual connections (01, & 04-06). However, in this excerpt, Merat limits his participation by positioning Behroz as a 'knowledgeable authority' in the group (09). My interpretation is that Merat limits his participation in this particular excerpt because he is not interested in the topic, as mentioned. In other excerpts in the study, his participation level is quite high, depending on the topic.

Subsequently, Teacher attempts to give Parviz space to participate by directing a question towards him (10), and Parviz responds, but it is a limited response. Then Teacher attempts to facilitate participation by making connections to texts that Teacher believes are familiar to the group. Specifically, he makes connections between the meaning of the word (sign) family in the United States, and the meaning of the sign in an Iranian context (13-14). Thus, Saeed participates as he shares his interpretation of family structure in Iran (15, 17-18). Saeed then continues to participate because of the familiarity of the text (20), and with encouragement and some linguistic assistance from Teacher (16 & 19).

Next, Teacher attempts again to engage Merat by directly asking him a question (21), but Merat limits his participation by giving a short, affirmative response (22). Nonetheless, Teacher continues to try to facilitate participation by relating the topic to texts that the participants are familiar with (23-24, & 26). Behroz takes up the position of 'knowledgeable cultural authority' (27), as previously discussed, and, as a result,

becomes centered in the participation by sharing with a cultural outsider (Teacher) his interpretations of family life in Iran (27, 29-30, 32, 34-35, 37, 39 & 40).

In lines 43 through 46, Teacher once again attempts to enhance participation by making intertextual connections between interpretations of family life in the United States and family life in Iran. The topic of discussion allows space for Saeed and Behroz, particularly Behroz, to become centered in the participation. In my view, Behroz participates not only as a 'knowledgeable cultural informant' about family 'structures' in Iran, he also engages as a participant who has some knowledge of discourse related to family life in the United States (49-51, 53-55 & 57).

Near the end of the excerpt, Behroz changes the topic on his own to families in Iran, which positions Teacher to participate as 'learner' or 'student' (58-61), which Teacher does not contest, but shows interest in. Teacher then asks questions related to family size in Iran. Saeed responds to Teacher's questions, but in a limited way because Behroz has positioned himself as an 'authority' (65-67, & 69-70). However, Teacher later takes over the 'center' of the participation 'structure' from Behroz as he switches the topic back to U.S. popular texts (71-75), which allows Saeed to participate briefly (76), and then Behroz again responds to Teacher's question and begins to participate as 'knowledgeable student' as he shares his interpretations about U.S. American family life as depicted in popular texts (77, & 79-82).

In this excerpt, the data seems to indicate that the participation structure was different compared to the excerpts in the beginning of the course, even though one of the five participants was minimally engaged (Merat). On several occasions, Teacher would make connections to texts or discourses in Iran to allow the participants

opportunities to share their backgrounds with a 'cultural outsider,' which affected their participation levels. In this excerpt, Behroz often became the 'center' of the participation, although this 'structure' was dynamic and changed frequently as Teacher would often direct or redirect the topic of conversation. Nonetheless, the participation 'structure' is clearly different from early excerpts that have been shown in this chapter, where the data clearly indicates more of a Teacher-centered 'structure' of participation.

As indicated earlier, but will be reiterated now, the change can be explained in part by a change in the focus of the topics during the classes. Teacher changed the content of the classes from focusing almost exclusively on U.S. American popular texts, which the participants often had difficulties understanding, to an emphasis on using American popular and other texts as a springboard to connections with similar texts and discourses from the participants' sociocultural backgrounds in Iran.

In the preceding excerpt, Behroz clearly had the highest level of participation in the discussions, which was not unusual. Throughout the course, Behroz did have a higher level of participation in most of the discussions. My explanation of why Behroz had the highest level of participation is as follows: First, his status in the group was that of 'oldest brother,' and, according to a cultural informant, the oldest male sibling in an Iranian family typically has higher status than other siblings; second, Behroz had by far the most education of the four brothers; and third, he had been in the United States the longest, and his English proficiency was the highest. For these reasons, he was centered more often than the other participants.

In sum, the excerpts from the data shown in this chapter, which were chosen chronologically from the beginning to near the end of the course, indicate that the participation 'structure' did change over time. I will briefly summarize how it changed, and offer explanations as to why it changed.

In the first two excerpts, taken from the data that was collected near the beginning of the course, Teacher dominated the discourse as the other participants participated minimally. Teacher ended up being positioned primarily as 'teacher' and as a 'knowledgeable authority' because the content of the discussions focused primarily on 'U.S. American' popular texts. That is, texts produced in the United States were not connected intertextually and interdiscursively with texts and discourses from the participants' backgrounds. As a consequence, the participants were positioned unintentionally as unknowledgeable. Thus, there was a noticeable lack of participation amongst the participants. In short, the participation 'structure' seemed to replicate a 'traditional' teacher-centered class, where the 'teacher' has authority and knowledge, and where 'students' were positioned as unknowledgeable, and were often silenced except when called upon. This was certainly not the intent of the teacher/researcher, but it is what occurred in the beginning of the course.

In the third excerpt shown in this chapter, which was taken from data collected almost half way through the course, there were noticeable differences in the participation 'structure.' While Teacher positioned himself in the beginning of the excerpt as a 'knowledgeable authority' about popular texts, he attempted to make intertextual connections with texts from the participants' sociocultural backgrounds. As a consequence, Teacher positioned the participants as 'knowledgeable authorities' on

'Iranian culture.' The participants, particularly Behroz, took up this position and began to share their interpretations of various Iranian texts. Therefore, the participants became centered in the participation structure as 'knowledgeable authorities' and as a result, Teacher ended up positioning himself as 'student' as he listened to the participants' expertise. As a consequence, the participation 'structure' was different from the first two excerpts because the participants became centered in the class. They share texts and discourses that they were familiar with from their backgrounds. In short, they became positioned as 'knowledgeable' and 'teachers' of cultural content. This change in participation 'structure' occurred because intertextual and interdiscursive connections were made between U.S. American popular texts and discourses and similar Iranian texts and discourses.

In the fourth excerpt of this section, which was taken from data collected at the end of the fourth week—the middle of the course—the change in participation 'structure' as compared to the excerpts taken at the beginning of the course is apparent. At the beginning of the fourth excerpt, Teacher positioned himself as 'teacher' and Parviz was positioned as 'student.' However, the participation 'structure' began to change as the topic of conversation changed to signs and texts connected to Iran. This change impacted the participation 'structure' in that Teacher began to again participate as a 'cultural learner,' and Behroz became positioned as 'knowledgeable cultural authority,' which did not occur during the first two excerpts. Although there was switching of positions between Teacher and Behroz as Teacher claimed knowledge about a particular sign that had both religious and corporate meaning within different contexts, it is evident that making intertextual and interdiscursive connections to Iranian

texts and contexts empowered the participants and changed the participation 'structure' from what it was early on in the course. In the fourth excerpt, Parviz also participated more, whereas in the first couple of excerpts he was essentially silenced as a 'non-English speaker.' The interaction between Behroz and Teacher in the fourth excerpt was more complex than earlier excerpts as positions between them changed and were negotiated. That is, even though the conversation changed to texts and signs related to Iran, Teacher sometimes claimed 'knowledge.' Nonetheless, the participation was clearly different from excerpts early on because the focus was more on texts and discourses related to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants.

In the last excerpt, a similar pattern emerged where the participation 'structure' was decidedly different from the first two excerpts and similar to the preceding two excerpts in that there were transitions in positions and identities that impacted the participation 'structure.' That is, when the topic of conversation was about Iranian texts the participants become centered; however, when the focus was on U.S. American popular texts, Teacher was most often centered. Of course, there were other complexities as discussed earlier such as Merat limiting his participation; nonetheless, the overall pattern of participation was similar to excerpts three and four of this chapter.

In sum, the participation 'structure' did change over time. It changed from a 'structure' that was Teacher-centered, to a 'structure' that was more dynamic. That is, different participants were centered as 'knowledgeable authorities,' and positioning was negotiated and in flux in the latter excerpts. The reason why it changed is clear. In the beginning of the course, the content was focused almost exclusively on U.S. American popular texts, where Teacher was clearly positioned as the 'expert' and

'knowledgeable,' and the other participants were not. Later on in the course, Teacher made a strategic change so that while U.S. popular texts were still used, they were used as springboards to similar texts and discourses from the participants' sociocultural backgrounds. In other words, as intertextual and interdiscursive connections were made between U.S. American popular and other texts and texts related to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, the participation 'structure' changed from Teacher being centered as the 'knowledgeable authority' to a 'structure' where the other participants were frequently centered as 'knowledgeable authorities.'

The findings in this chapter provide answers to a research question stated at the beginning of the study: In what ways did the conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings impact learning? The findings indicate that when the participants were centered in the conversational structure as 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' opportunities for learning existed. Specifically, when centered in the conversation, the participants had more opportunities to learn new meanings of texts, to learn how to use language in a comprehensible way with a cultural outsider in the target language, and to learn how to communicate in a cross-cultural context due to increased interaction (Diaz-Rico, 2004). Bloome et al.'s (2005) conceptual construct of identity proved to be very useful in understanding the dynamics of identity in social situations and its impact on conversational structure.

The findings in this chapter also point to the crucial role that social interaction has on language learning settings, and the importance of connecting to texts related to the sociocultural backgrounds of learners. Thus, the findings support significant concepts embedded within sociocultural theory (Kern, 2000).

Participatory structure(s) has implications for language and literacy development. The literature suggests that in order for there to be language development in learners there needs to be interaction in the target language (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Kehe & Kehe, 1998). It is implications for the field that I will turn my attention to in chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to find out how the use of popular texts might facilitate language and literacy development for non-native speakers of English. In order to achieve this end, the use of popular texts was used in a 'class' taught over a summer. The participants were a small group of recent immigrants, four brothers from Iran, and the teacher/researcher (the author of the study). The data, obtained through audiotaping, was analyzed with the following research questions guiding the analysis and the study: How and to what extent do participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs?; In what ways do the conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings impact learning?; What pedagogical challenges and affordances are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts?

Summary of Findings

Interpretation of Signs for Cultural and Linguistic Meaning

The data indicated that the participants negotiated meanings of signs through interaction. The group constructs of meanings of 'signs' sometimes conflicted with concepts or interpretations of signs participants had before the interaction. For example, in the excerpt about the 'Olympics' (see Table 3: Excerpt 1), the meaning the group

constructed about one aspect of the 'Olympic Games' conflicted with previous notions that I, in my role as 'teacher,' had presented. That is, Behroz pointed out that signs and logos connected to corporate interests were ubiquitous, conflicting with what I, in my role as 'teacher,' had previously stated about the Games being pure, free from commercial interests. The opportunity and space was provided for the development of meaning through interaction. The group also negotiated a joint construction of meaning about the 'Olympic Flag' through interaction. And indications of critical thinking and reflection were observed, as Behroz questioned the influences of commercial interests on the Games and assumptions of the 'teacher.'

At times, the negotiation of meaning of particular signs in 'American' contexts led to interaction about meanings of related or corresponding signs in 'Iranian' contexts. For example, when the group discussed the meaning of signs related to rank in the American military, which was connected to a popular text ("Beetle Bailey"), the discussion turned to corresponding signs that represent rank in the Iranian military. Through the negotiation of meanings of signs about military rank in a cross-cultural context, social significance was constructed, although I didn't recognize the significance at the time of the interaction, but did so later on in my role as 'researcher.' Specifically, the reason why Merat and Saeed were not allowed to attain any rank in the Iranian military was due to systematic discrimination based on religious identity. This has implications for educators that will be discussed in the implications section.

Another example of when a sign or text from a 'North American' context was used as a springboard to discuss signs from an Iranian context occurred when the group had a conversation about 'Hip-Hop' and its resistance by Iranian authorities. A

conversation then ensued about the authorities, and about the social significance of facial hair in Iranian society—specifically, how facial hair connects to other texts (religious) and to broader religious discourse(s) in Iran. And, in the process of interaction about the meaning of a cultural sign (facial hair), cultural and linguistic meaning was shared, which was facilitated by the group making intertextual connections.

In the excerpt that related to 'appropriate attire' in Iran (see Table 6: Excerpt 4) the group constructed intertextual connections between signs/texts related to attire and political/government texts. A joint construction of meaning was conveyed by and negotiated between the participants in English, and in the process Behroz and Merat became centered as 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' which allowed space for authentic conversational practice in English. The centering of the participants in the conversation, through the discussion of texts and discourses related to their sociocultural background, has important implications that will be discussed later as well.

The findings indicate that, through the interpretation of signs and texts, connections were made to larger institutional discourses. For instance, when the conversation was about the production of silk carpets in Iran, the participants began to draw upon discourses related to labor and gender in Iran, and constructed versions of those discourses with a cultural outsider through interaction.

In the process of the group interpreting and negotiating the meanings of signs, it became evident that ideology and theology were embedded in the texts constructed by the group. For example, when Saeed expressed his interpretations about the meaning of

a sign embedded in a larger text, the Iranian flag (see Table 8: Excerpt 6, Figures 3 & 4), ideology and theology were explicitly shared and negotiated, which offered opportunities for further critical reflection.

Negotiation of Meaning of Texts and Construction of Joint Discourse(s)

In the excerpt entitled "Gender names in Iran," the data indicated that the participants made connections to and interpretations of historical and religious texts and discourses in Iran through the discussion of names (see Table 10: Excerpt 8). As a result, intertextual and interdiscursive connections, evident in the excerpt, were made, which allowed for the construction of meaningful conversation. It also provided evidence that when the participants shared cultural knowledge with an outsider, it not only centered the participants as 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' it also at times positioned 'Teacher' as a 'learner' who did not always fully understand the implications of the text, as was the case with the intertextual connections that were made between 'Mary' and 'Maryam' within the broader contexts of Islamic and Christian discourses. It was only after I (as researcher) analyzed the data and did additional research that I discovered that Saeed and I were interpreting the meaning of the sign/name Maryam differently because we come from different sociocultural communities. This finding has implications for educators, which will be discussed later.

In the excerpts about Persian carpets (see Table 11: Excerpt 9), the data indicated that the participants were connecting to discourses from their previous communities in Iran (Gee, 1996, pp. 122-148). That is, in the process of constructing

discourses in a social setting with a cultural outsider, they drew upon familiar discourses from their previous sociocultural communities, as alluded to earlier.

The cultural sharing of discourses from the participants' previous sociocultural backgrounds continues in the excerpt, "The women's movement in Iran" (see Table 12: Excerpt 10). That is, the construction of the text that is evident in the data was influenced by discourses from the participants' previous sociocultural community. It needs to be reiterated that the discourse community that the participants belonged to in Iran was not, in many ways, connected to 'dominant Discourses' in Iran, because it was not part of the 'dominant group' in Iran (Gee, 1996, p. 132). Specifically, the participants belonged to a minority community, Bahá'í, as stated in the beginning of this study; thus, their Discourse(s) were often marginalized. Therefore, the discourses they draw upon often differ, to a degree, from discourses connected to the mainstream or dominant community in Iran. Thus, the interdiscursive constructions that were developed, in the excerpt about the women's movement in Iran, that related to gender, politics, economics, law, family and class are examples of discourses that would differ from 'dominant discourses' connected to the dominant community in Iran (Gee, 1996). They are evidence of a joint construction of discourse(s) with a cultural outsider that reflect, to a high degree, the discourses of the speech community that they belonged to in Iran, which happens to espouse the equality of women and men (see Esslemont, 1978). In short, the participants jointly constructed a discourse that focused on gender discrimination in Iran, which was meaningful and provided evidence of critical reflection on the part of the participants.

As represented in the last two excerpts in chapter 5, 'Social Whirl' and 'Cinderella in a Cross-Cultural Context,' the focus of the conversation related to a discourse about socio-economic divisions in Iran. The participants shared their interpretations of the discourse with 'Teacher.' In the process, the participants engaged in meaningful conversation about an important social justice issue in Iran, and in the world—class divisions (see Mohammadi, 2005). The data from this excerpt indicate that the participants engaged in critical reflection as well.

A significant finding in this section of the study is that while the conversations often began with the participants centered on an 'American' popular text, connections were made to similar texts in Iranian contexts, which had the effect of centering the participants in the conversation. The process of making intertextual connections in a cross-cultural context provided learning moments for all, including the 'teacher.' For the 'students' it provided practice developing meaningful conversation in the target language. For the 'teacher,' it provided entry into unfamiliar discourses from the participants' sociocultural backgrounds (Gee, 1996). This often positioned the 'teacher' as 'learner,' which has implications that will be discussed later.

As mentioned earlier, the conversations that developed during the classes centered on topics, such as the oppression of women and class divisions, that compelled the participants to view the world and issues that they were familiar with with critical lenses. Behroz stated that learning how to engage in conversations about topics of import was important to him. He said that before attending the class, he "did not even know what a good topic for conversation was" (p. 202). He also shared that "not having enough knowledge about the subject of interests, I have always preferred to refrain from

engaging in conversations since it always make a fool out of me commenting on matters, which I know a little about" (p. 202). In sum, the findings suggest that discursive practices in class provided opportunities for language development.

Identity and Changes in Participation Structure

The findings in the excerpts indicate that in the beginning of the course, participation on the part of the 'students' was minimal (see Table 15: Excerpt 13; Table 16: Excerpt 14). The findings also suggest that the reason for the lack of participation early on was due to the participants having difficulty making connections to North American popular texts that were presented by the 'teacher.' Thus, early on, the 'learners' participated passively with minimal interaction with the 'teacher.' With the participants largely silenced, 'Teacher' became centered in the conversation, and he became the 'knowledgeable authority' of the group. Therefore, early in the course, the class took on a 'traditional' participatory structure with the 'teacher' centered as the 'knowledgeable' source. This was not the intent of the teacher/researcher. Nonetheless, the findings indicate that when the group focused exclusively on North American popular texts, without making connections to texts and discourses related to the sociocultural communities of the participants, participation on the part of the 'learners' was stifled. In short, the participation structure initially could be defined as 'teacher-centered.'

As the course progressed, the participation structure changed as 'Teacher' began to facilitate connections to texts and discourses related to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, although Western popular texts were still used as springboards to

other texts. For example, after watching a clip from the movie "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets" (Columbus, 2002), the group began negotiating meaning of specific signs in the film, such as an 'owl' and a 'phoenix,' that signified meanings in 'Iranian' texts that differed from meanings constructed in the film. That is, Teacher allowed the participants to provide him, the 'cultural outsider,' with interpretations of signs and texts in an Iranian context, even though they were examining signs embedded in Western texts. By allowing the participants to share their interpretations of 'Iranian' signs and texts, the 'teacher' facilitated the positioning of the participants as 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' and this had the effect of 'centering' the participants in the participation structure.

This pattern of the 'teacher' enabling the participants to become centered in the participation structure, by allowing them to share their interpretations of culturally familiar texts and discourses from their sociocultural backgrounds, continued throughout much of the course. This pattern had the effect of increasing interaction and constructions of meaningful texts.

In sum, in the beginning of the course, the participation structure was primarily teacher-centered because the focus of the content was almost exclusively on popular texts from the United States, centering 'Teacher' as the 'knowledgeable authority' and primary source. However, later on, the findings indicate that as popular texts from the United States were used as springboards to discuss similar texts from the participants' previous sociocultural community(ies), the participants often became centered as 'knowledgeable authorities,' and the level of interaction in the classes increased. The

increase in the level of interaction is a crucial finding, because social interaction is essential for language development (Diaz-Rico, 2004).

Implications

Implications for Teaching

Language education programs that give emphasis to cognitive and linguistic issues and ignore sociocultural issues often lead to more traditional literacy practices (Roskos et al., 1998). The findings of this study indicate a need to consider the role of popular and other texts and discourses that relate or connect to the sociocultural lives of language learners. This could be achieved by introducing texts from the media, such as newspapers, magazines, DVDs, CDs, etc., which could provide opportunities for analysis of the texts by learners and the production of meaningful discourse(s). For those who might argue that popular texts are not 'academic' enough, the data in this study indicates that, through making connections during the analysis of popular texts, the participants were able to engage in conversations related to history, religion, politics, economics, sociology, international relations, and gender. Thus, one can see the possibilities of academic literacies being developed through the use of popular texts as springboards.

When the group had difficulties constructing meaning of signs and texts, I, in my role as 'teacher,' would attempt to make connections to similar 'Iranian' texts and discourses, and this, more often than not, facilitated meaning making in the group. Thus, even though the data supports the effectiveness of the use of popular texts for

analysis, since the learners were from different backgrounds, connections needed to be made to texts and discourses that related to their backgrounds. If connections were not made, as was the case early on in the study, participation and interaction was limited. In short, when North American popular texts were the sole focus, participation and the level of interaction was negatively impacted. However, that does not signify that popular texts should be avoided in L2 classrooms; it only reflects the need to make connections to texts and discourses familiar to the learners in order to provide context for them.

The positive implication of allowing cultural sharing, centering learners as knowledgeable, and valuing cultural knowledge is an important finding of the study. These practices facilitated the development of meaningful discourse and interaction, which are important for the development of language and literacies (Young & Miller, 2004).

The findings suggest that the use of popular texts can result in critical discourse, which is an important gateway to various literacies, although this area was not developed as much as it could have been. Yet, as revealed in the excerpts that were shared, conversations were developed when popular texts were connected to discourses from the participants' backgrounds in Iran, as previously stated, and discussions about issues or topics, such as family, religion, history, law, gender, class, economics, and politics, became especially meaningful.

Critical discourse and reflection could have been developed more by asking different types of questions during the classes. In hindsight, I would have asked more open-ended questions, particularly for the purpose of stimulating more critical

reflection. Specifically, I would have asked questions that might have facilitated more interpretive analysis, as opposed to the sharing of information and opinions (Maasik & Solomon, 2003, p. viii). However, this can be challenging to do, particularly for 'beginning' students, such as Parviz. The participants did share their interpretive analysis, particularly during the latter stages of the course. Nonetheless, at times my questioning focused on a right/wrong format, which is not conducive to developing interpretive analysis or critical reflection. I could have taken more contrary positions to stimulate thinking or asked more hypothetical questions. In short, if I were to do the class over again, I would have asked more questions that would have started in the following ways: "what does…"; "in what ways…"; "what if…"; "why does…"; etc. (see Maasik & Solomon, 2003).

What the participants said in this study supports the concept that discourses do conflict, compete, and are often contested (Thibault, 1991). Nowhere is this more apparent than when discourses generated in the more secular West are juxtaposed with discourses generated in the Islamic East. This has implications for certain English language learning situations that educators need to be concerned with. Specifically, it is important for educators to become aware of texts and discourses of learners from different cultural backgrounds. For example, I was not fully aware of some texts that relate to Islamic discourse, at the time of the interaction in my role as 'teacher' (see "Gender Names in Iran"), and it wasn't until later, in my role as 'researcher,' did I discover my ignorance. This has implications for educators who teach in multicultural settings. It suggests a need to become aware of texts and discourses that are associated with the sociocultural backgrounds of their students. It also suggests a need on the part

of educators to critically reflect upon interactions that occur in the classroom or other educational settings.

English language learners want to learn English for myriad reasons, and the type of texts and discourses used in interactions for the purpose of language and literacy development need to match the particular discourse community the learner is attempting to enter. In other words, educators need to take into account the learners' sociocultural and socio-economic 'realities' when deciding upon content for use in language learning settings. The use of popular texts from the United States has widespread applications because they are globally ubiquitous; however, there needs to be reflection and caution about their use, because some communities and/or governments in the world currently oppose or resist American texts, as is discussed in this study. However, popular texts are appropriate and useful within North American contexts; that is, in English language learning situations where immigrants have voluntarily moved to the United States for the purpose of working and living, it is legitimate and useful to expose such learners to popular texts and discourses. I feel that this study supports the use of popular texts from the United States in many educational settings, because it can facilitate entrance into various discourse communities for the 'cultural outsider.' Yet, English language educators need to be cognizant of the views, needs, intentions, and perceptions of English language learners in various settings.

Implications for Research

The pervasiveness of popular texts globally makes it compelling to look at how these texts might be used constructively in educational settings, which was a goal of this

study. More research is needed in this area. Further research is needed to develop strategies in L2 settings that foster conversational structures that are meaningful and critical. That is, the development of pedagogical strategies and the use of texts need to be researched more so that both educators and learners can be enabled to negotiate meanings and engage in sophisticated thinking and analysis.

My own role in this study, as both 'teacher' and 'researcher,' has implications for further research. I made a decision early on to distance myself from my role as teacher while engaged in analysis of the data and during the writing process. The strategy that I used to distance myself from my role as the 'teacher' of the class was to refer to myself in the third person, and naming my role 'teacher' instead of referring to myself by name or in the first person very often. This proved to be an effective strategy. I was able to detach from my role as the 'teacher,' which created space to critically analyze shortcomings in method, as well as to point out ignorance on my part at times during my role as the 'teacher.' I feel that this distance was essential, because in my role as researcher I needed to be critical of and distanced from my role as 'teacher.' In this way, I could observe and analyze the data and my performance as 'teacher' without rose-colored lenses.

The research setting in this study influenced how the participants interacted with each other. That is, the setting of the research was in the home of the participants, which has implications related to identity. I am suggesting that the situation or the context influences identities, which in turn influences social interaction (Bloome et al., 2005). Specifically, the participants were the hosts, and I was the guest in their home. One could ask if this influenced the dynamics of the 'teacher-learner' relationship. And, if

so, what implications would the relationship have, in the context described, on the development of linguistic and communicative competencies? Would the interaction have been different if the research had been conducted in an institutional setting, such as a school? If so, in what ways would the interaction be different? The study indicates that the setting did influence the 'teacher-learner' relationship. The setting provided a venue that encouraged informality, and this facilitated interaction, which is crucial for language acquisition. That is, the setting provided a comfort level that facilitated interaction. The class was relaxed, and the participants often shared narratives, which provided language practice or language 'playfulness' (Sullivan, 2000). The importance of having a relaxed environment that facilitates interaction is an area for further research.

Conclusions

A basic assumption underlying this study is that people learn languages and literacies within social contexts, and texts and discourses are developed in various sociocultural worlds including community and school (Dyson, 1993; Gee, 1996). Popular texts were used in the study because, from a sociocultural perspective, content related to popular culture could possibly open up sociocultural worlds—stimulating worlds with which young adults could critically engage and interact. My assumption was that using a combination of interesting, relevant, and schematically-accessible content, that is, popular texts, could be an invaluable strategy for language and literacy development for young adults from another cultural background.

Going into this study, I felt educators and learners should understand the nature of popular texts produced and dispersed globally every day. I still feel this way. People around the world interact with these texts everyday with myriad interpretations. For instance, North American popular texts are sometimes perceived as hegemonic or even 'evil' in some parts of the world, and at the same time, popular texts and discourses play ubiquitous roles in the lives of young people around the globe. Therefore, it is important that we take notice of these social 'realities.' Thus, looking closely at interpretations that a small group of young adults from Iran constructed of popular and other cultural texts is relevant and important.

In many respects, the findings from the data of the study support the use of popular texts, which I discussed in the findings section. However, as I discussed earlier, these 'North American' popular texts were most useful and accessible when connections were made to the participants' sociocultural backgrounds. Conversations I had with the participants offer reasons as to why the use of popular texts in educational settings is important. Behroz explained to me in an interview that he had some experience learning English in Iran using 'traditional' methods, which focused on decontextualized grammar instruction. He said that when he came to the United States, communication was extremely difficult for him. As he put it: "I didn't know what was like a good topic to start talking about. In school I tried to start communicating with people because I wanted to know what was going on." Saeed also stated the importance of becoming familiar with discourses in order to engage in conversations. He said, "But, you know, it's necessary when you want to communicate with somebody, you have to

know a little about this culture. It is so important. You can't just talk about politics or maybe science."

Furthermore, popular texts can offer context for English language learners, particularly for adolescents and young adults. Even though the participants in this study were from Iran, a nation where the government purposely and explicitly tries to prohibit popular texts from abroad, the participants had some exposure to and knowledge of many of the texts. As Behroz stated in an interview, "I mean if it's popular culture, I mean we have been exposed to it, like unconsciously, we have some information. It's not complete, but we've thought about it a little."

The focus on 'signs' also appeared to be instrumental in the negotiation of meaning making between the participants. Behroz added this in a personal interview about the focus on signs embedded in texts: "It's like become like an auxiliary tool for me now, I mean when I don't understand I like looking at something like those pictures—I don't have a clue right now, but I can use those pictures to at least sort out something to work with, so it really helps."

The data in this study appears to indicate that when signs were analyzed, intertextual and interdiscursive connections were made that constructed meaningful joint discourses. However, at times the intertextual and interdiscursive connections were not taken up until after the class, and done by me in my role as researcher. In part, this was due to my lack of familiarity or expertise with certain texts and discourses; for example, the content regarding the sign/name Maryam and Islamic discourse. Nonetheless, the analysis of signs provided learning moments, including for me in my role as researcher.

As discussed in the findings section, the study indicates the necessity of connecting to signs, texts, and discourses of the participants' sociocultural backgrounds, which was often done using popular texts from the United States as springboards. The participants indicated to the researcher that they recognized the importance of interacting with popular texts as access to cultural knowledge, which can facilitate entrance into discourse communities. Yet, the findings of this study indicate that the process of understanding popular texts, for learners who come from outside of the communities where the texts are produced, was more difficult than I, the researcher, originally anticipated. Intertextual and interdiscursive connections needed to be made between the texts and discourses from the discourse communities they are attempting to enter and texts and discourses from the learners' sociocultural backgrounds. When asked about whether or not discussing Iranian culture facilitated understanding, Saeed said the following: "Because when you try to think about your own culture and American culture you find some difference between them and similarities, and so, you can find a lot of things. If you only think about American culture maybe you can't find a lot of things…"

There was pedagogical value in the process of sharing and jointly developing intertextual and interdiscursive connections. As Parviz said in the interview at the end of the course, "We talked about the Iranian culture, and then we talked about the American culture, and it was very easy to understand why it is different, you know, and, what the difference between the two cultures—like Iranian are not individualist, and Americans are individualist." While one could argue that this was an over-

generalization, the point is that Parviz was making connections in English, which he wasn't able to do in the beginning of the course eight weeks earlier.

When I did not make connections to the participants' sociocultural backgrounds, there was an evident impact on participation structure(s). Specifically, when the discourse centered exclusively on Western popular texts, the 'teacher' was centered as the 'knowledgeable authority' who needed to be listened to. This often had the effect of silencing the participants. In an English language learning situation this is not favorable, in that it is not conducive to language and literacy development because there is a minimal level of interaction (Young & Miller, 2004). There needs to be a significant amount of interaction to facilitate acquisition of the target language (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Kehe & Kehe, 1998). By making intertextual connections to familiar texts from the backgrounds of the participants, interaction increased significantly. It also had the effect of centering the participants in the discussions. That is, when the discourse was related to Iran, the data indicated that the participation structure changed to learner-centered; the participants were centered as 'knowledgeable,' and their cultural knowledge was valued as important, meaningful, and interesting. In other words, when the participants in the study interpreted 'Iranian' signs and texts for the 'teacher,' they became the 'knowledgeable cultural authorities,' which not only centered the participants, but established that their knowledge, culture, and identities as Iranians was valued.

Through looking at signs and texts with critical lenses, the participants were able to construct interpretations and joint discourses that have begun to prepare them to enter related discourse communities. The discussion of meaningful signs, from both societies, created learning moments for all the participants. In other words, through the

negotiation of signs and texts in a cross-cultural context, the data indicated that not only were meaningful joint discourses constructed, critical insights about class, gender, politics, religion, and other social aspects were shared, and the literature suggests this is a bridge to literacies (Corning, 1997; Garnsey, 1997; & Luke, 1997). That is, as the participants negotiated meanings of signs, texts and discourses, intertextual and interdiscursive connections were made, and many opportunities were created, through interaction about topics related to gender, class, religion, and other social issues, that sparked interest and expanded dialogue. This provided opportunities for enhanced critical understanding of the 'world' for all of the participants, including the 'teacher.'

To conclude, I will end with the research questions that I opened this study with and summarize answers from the findings. I asked first, how and to what extend do the participants construct discourse(s) that are meaningful and critical through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs. The findings indicate that the participants did, to a significant extent, construct discourse(s) that were meaningful and, at times, critical. Excerpts from the data show that through a joint examination of popular and other cultural texts and signs, discourses were constructed by the participants that were meaningful and, at times, showed evidence of critical reflection. The participants jointly constructed discourses related to gender, economic justice, religion, and politics, among other areas that often focused on social justice issues and oppression. The findings also indicate that the construction of meaningful discourse most often occurred when connections were made to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, which related mostly to Iran. That is, although most of the texts that were jointly examined were 'North American' popular texts, discourse(s) were jointly

constructed through making intertextual and interdiscursive connections cross-culturally.

Next, in this study, I wanted to address in what ways the conversational structure(s) of the group during negotiations of popular textual meanings impact learning. In the excerpts when the 'teacher' (researcher) was positioned, or 'centered,' as a 'knowledgeable authority,' the participants often were silenced. This often occurred at times when the meanings of texts being negotiated were 'North American.' However, these North American texts often served as springboards to other texts that were often related to the backgrounds of the participants. When there was negotiation of meanings of texts that were related to the sociocultural backgrounds of the participants, the participants often became 'centered' as the 'knowledgeable authorities.' And through the process of sharing knowledge of cultural texts with a cultural outsider, the participants learned new meanings of English texts and signs, how to make themselves comprehensible to a cultural outsider through the use of English, and how to communicate in a cross-cultural context through practice.

And finally, I wanted to look at the pedagogical challenges and affordances that are evident in designing and implementing an ESL curriculum centered on popular and other cultural texts. A notable pedagogical challenge regarded how to facilitate learner participation. The data indicates that when the popular texts did not relate or connect to the backgrounds of the participants, the participants were often silenced; their interaction was limited, unless the 'teacher' was able to make intertextual and/or interdiscursive connections to texts and discourses related to the backgrounds of the participants. At times, making connections also proved challenging. The affordances

that were evident included the group's process of being able to negotiate meaning and make intertextual and interdiscursive connections across cultures. When this occurred, the participants were often better able to understand popular and other texts, and then they were able to communicate meaning in the target language with a cultural outsider. Using popular texts from the United States as content for learning was judged important by all the participants, learners and teacher, because the texts are ubiquitous, and because they help provide entry into new discourse communities.

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